NATION

Bihar mandates registration of temples, mutts, & trusts

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BUSINESS

Market tumbles nearly 1% post RBI policy decision

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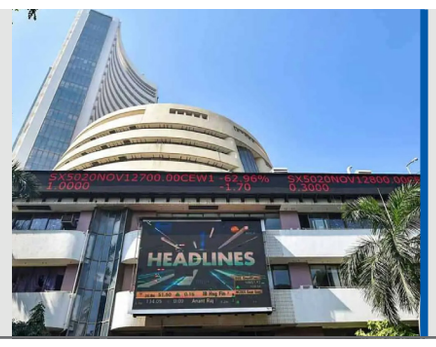

SPORTS

MOHUN BAGAN CRUSH INDIAN AIR FORCE 6-0

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Amid showdown, Govt sends Waqf Bill to joint parliamentary panel

Centre says the proposed Bill does not interfere with functioning of mosques

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a joint parliamentary panel after a heated debate, with the government asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques and the Opposition calling it targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said he will talk with leaders of all parties for constituting the joint parliamentary committee.

Soon after Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju sought leave to introduce the Bill, opposition INDIA bloc MPs strongly protested the introduction of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, calling it an "attack" on the Constitution and aimed at targeting Muslims.

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju speaks in Lok Sabha during the Monsoon session, in New Delhi on Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Strongly defending the bill and hitting out at the Congress, Rijiju said the Wakf Act of 1995 did not serve its purpose and the amendments were necessitated as the Congress could not achieve the reform it should have.

"Some people have captured Waqf boards and this Bill has been brought to give justice to ordinary Muslims," he said. He claimed that many leaders in the Opposition had told him that state Waqf boards had turned into a mafia.

"In our country, no law can be a super law and that can't be above the Constitution. However, in the 1995 Wakf Act, there are provisions that are above the provisions in the Constitution," he asked.

He assured Waqf board income will be used only for the welfare of the MusliMS.

Rijiju also introduced a Bill to repeal the Mussalman Wakf Act, 1923.

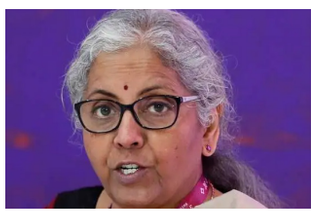
NDA allies JD(U), TDP, Shiv Sena and LJP backed the Bill amend the 1995 Act, saying it was aimed at bringing transparency in the functioning of the Waqf Boards and was not an attempt to interfere with the running of mosques. The Bill to amend the law governing Waqf boards proposes far-reaching changes in the 1995 Act, including ensuring representation of Muslim women and non-Muslims in such bodies.

According to its statement of objects and reasons, the Bill seeks to omit Section 40 of the current law relating to the powers of the board to decide if a property is Waqf property.

It provides for a broad-based composition of the Central Waqf Council and state Waqf boards, and proposes to establish a separate board of Auqaf for Boharas and Aghakhanis. It provides for representation of Shias, Sunnis, Bohras, Agakhanis and other backward classes among Muslims.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill also aims at renaming the Act as the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act, 1995. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3



Nirmala Sitharaman ***PHOTO: PTI***

PARLIAMENT COMPLETES BUDGET EXERCISE

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Parliamentary approval for the Budget 2024-25 was completed on Thursday with the Rajya Sabha returning the relevant legislations to the Lok Sabha after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's spirited reply to the debate emphasising Budget was aimed at promoting investments and creating jobs.

The Rajya Sabha returned the Appropriation Bill and the Finance Bill to the Lok Sabha, thus completing the budgetary exercise for 2024-25. The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Bill too was returned to the Lower House.

Earlier, these bills were approved by the Lok Sabha.

Sitharaman presented the Budget in the Lok Sabha on 23 July. It was her seventh Budget. Replying to the discussions in the Upper House, the Minister said the Union Budget balances different overriding imperatives, including growth, employment, capital expenditure, and fiscal consolidation.

On concerns raised by some members regarding haircuts in insolvency cases, Sitharaman said defaulting promoters are not allowed to re-bid for their own company so that "we don't have them coming through the back door and getting it for lesser price".

She also refuted assertions by Opposition members that Budget allocation for several key sectors has been reduced.

The issue of 18 per cent GST on health and life insurance premiums too figured prominently in speeches made by opposition members. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Ex- Bengal CM Buddhadeb dies at 80

KOLKATA, 8 AUG

Former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, who will be remembered both for his commitment to the communist ideology and a pragmatic approach to industrialising the state, passed away at the age of 80 at his residence here on Thursday. Bhattacharjee, a stalwart of CPI(M), was known for his efforts to bring industrialisation to the state, an endeavour that, despite his best intentions, eventually led to the downfall of the Left Front government after 34 years of continuous rule. *—PTI*

Modi to visit Wayanad on 10 August

T'PURAM, 8 AUG

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting the landslides-hit areas of Wayanad on 10 August and hoped that the PM will take a positive stand with regard to providing Central assistance for rehabilitation of the victims. He said that following the state's request, the Centre has appointed a committee to examine the severity of the disaster and submit a report in this regard. Vijayan said that the state hopes to receive a comprehensive rehabilitation package. *—PTI*

Under-construction bridge collapses in Bihar

KATIHAR, 8 AUG

Section of an under-construction bridge over the Ganga collapsed in Bihar's Katihar district on Thursday, officials said. The small bridge was being built by the Rural Works Department to connect the Bakiya Sukhaye panchayat area to the district headquarters town, they said. No casualty was reported as a result of the incident, they added. The construction of the bridge started recently. Two pillars of the small bridge collapsed. There might have been an increase in the river current, because of which the two pillars collapsed. The matter is being further examined, District Magistrate Manesh Kumar Meena said. *—PTI*

UNCERTAINTY CONTINUES

India says it does not know about Hasina's travel plans

Sheikh Hasina and Randhir Jaiswal

PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

India on Thursday said that they do not have any update on former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's plan.

Outlining New Delhi's approach on the evolving situation in Bangladesh, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said it is the responsibility of every government to ensure the well-being of all its citizens. He also said India wants restoration of peace and stability in the country "as soon as possible" so that normal life can begin.

"As far as we are concerned, the government of India and people of India are concerned -- for us the interest of people of Bangladesh is foremost in our minds," Jaiswal said.

"We also want to make it clear that it is the responsibility of every government to ensure the well-being of all its citizens," he added. Hasina's initial plan was to seek asylum in London. However, the plan has hit a roadblock following the UK's hesitation to provide her refuge. Sources said that it is for Hasina to decide where she wants to go from India. Regarding reports that some people, who came to India along with Hasina are leaving the country, Jaiswal said it is for them to decide. *—PTI*

> **As far as we are concerned, the government of India and people of India are concerned -- for us the interest of people of Bangladesh is foremost in our minds**
>
> -Ministry of External Affairs

>>>More on Page 3

Yunus sworn in as head of B'desh govt

DHAKA, 8 AUG

Life has come full circle for Professor Muhammad Yunus, a well-known critic of Sheikh Hasina and persecuted by her regime, when the Nobel laureate became the head of the caretaker government after she resigned and fled to India.

The 84-year-old economist, globally recognised as 'The Father of Microfinance,' who flew down from Paris earlier in the day, was declared as the head of the interim government by President Mohammed Shahabuddin after dissolving Parliament Tuesday, a decision prompted by a demand by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

Yunus had announced plans to form a political party in 2007 when the country was run by a military-backed government and criticised Bangladeshi politicians alleging they were only interested in money. He, however, did not follow through on that plan.

PHOTO: X/@YUNUS_CENTRE

> **Bangladesh has got a second independence. My call to the people is; if you have trust in me, then make sure there will be no attacks against anyone**
>
> -Muhammad Yunus, Head of interim government

By a quirk of fate, on Thursday he took oath to lead a non-partisan, non-military caretaker government.

Yunus, who started as a Professor at national and international Universities, earned the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize and the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1984 among scores of other international recognitions.

But back home, the founder of the Grameen Bank had been in a protracted row with Hasina's government due to obscure reasons while authorities initiated a series of investigations against him after she came to power in 2008. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 5 & 6

RBI keeps repo rate unchanged at 6.5%

MUMBAI, 8 AUG

Reserve Bank of India on Thursday expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting, saying it cannot afford to look through persisting high food inflation and has to remain vigilant to prevent spillover.

Retaining its unambiguous focus on inflation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which consists of three RBI and three external members, kept the benchmark repurchase or repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

Four out of the six members of MPC voted in favour of the rate decision. The panel, whose four-year term ends in October, also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target. RBI retained India's GDP growth forecast at 7.2 per cent and headline CPI inflation at 4.5 per cent for the current fiscal 2024-25.

PHOTO: PTI

- In another significant move, the central bank proposed to introduce a facility of "Delegated Payments" in UPI to enable an individual to allow another individual to make UPI transactions.

UPI transaction limit increased from Rs 1L to Rs 5L

The central bank also announced an increase in the transaction limit for tax payments through UPI to Rs 5 lakh. Currently, the transaction limit for UPI is Rs 1 lakh, except for certain categories of payments which have higher transaction limits.

In another significant move, the central bank proposed to introduce a facility of "Delegated Payments" in UPI to enable an individual to allow another individual to make UPI transactions. *—PTI*

MEDALS CAN'T WEIGH METTLE

Wrestling wins, I lost: Vinesh retires

PARIS, 8 AUG

PARIS, 8 AUG

A crestfallen Vinesh Phogat bid adieu to her international wrestling career on Thursday after her long-cherished Olympic dream shattered by a cruel twist of fate, saying that she doesn't have the strength to continue anymore.

Phogat, 29, who was disqualified for being 100gm overweight ahead of her 50kg category gold medal bout in the Olympics on Wednesday, announced her decision on social media, seeking forgiveness from everyone who supported her.

Addressing her mother Premlata, Vinesh, a three-time Olympian, wrote, "Maa, wrestling has won, I have lost. Please forgive me, your dreams and my courage, everything is broken."

Her stunning decision comes a day after Vinesh appealed against her disqualification from the Olympic finals in the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), demanding that she be awarded a joint silver medal.

An ad-hoc division of CAS, which has been set up here for resolution of any disputes arising during the Olympic Games, will take up her appeal in the next few hours. She spent a good part of the day at a polyclinic inside the Games village owing to severe dehydration caused by her desperate measures to make the cut, which included going hungry, avoiding fluids and staying up all night to sweat it out.

Sarah Hildebrandt from the USA scored early and held on to beat Cuba's Yusneylis Guzman Lopez and win gold in women's freestyle wrestling and Vinesh is now banking on CAS to be a joint silver-medallist with Lopez.

Vinesh had scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the gold medal bout in her category on Tuesday night. She was assured of at least a silver medal before the disqualification.

Also, India's Tokyo Olympics bronze medal winner Bajrang Punia led the tributes for Vinesh, saying she did not lose yet she has been defeated. "Vinesh, you did not lose but yet you have been defeated. For us, you will always be a winner and along with being India's daughter you are India's pride as well," he said in a post in Hindi. *—PTI*

> **Maa, wrestling has won, I have lost. Please forgive me, your dreams and my courage, everything is broken. I don't have any more strength now. Goodbye wrestling 2001-2024. I shall be indebted to you all. Forgive (me)**
>
> -Vinesh Phogat, Indian professional wrestler

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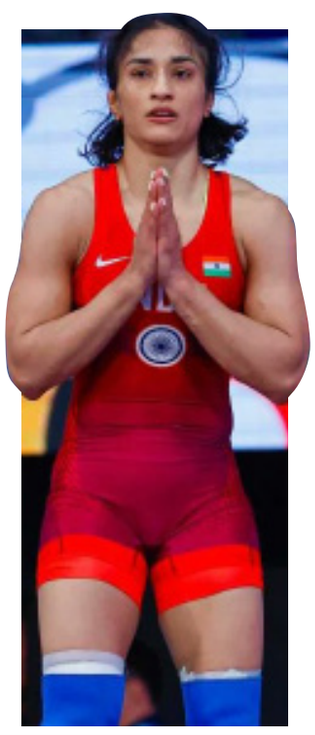


India win two successive hockey Bronze after 52 years

DANIEL GEORGE

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

Two bronze medals in as many Olympics is indeed special, said former Indian hockey skipper and two-time Olympian Jude Felix Sebastian after India beat Spain 2-1 in a bronze medal match at Paris Olympics on Thursday. "It is fantastic for the sport; the boys deserve all the laurels." Indians gave their heart and soul and played one of the best matches of this Olympics on Thursday, Bengaluru resident Sebastian told Salar News. The Dronacharya awardee said he was proud of the team despite the defeat to Germany in the semi-final. ***—Salar News***

>>>More on Page 8

Aman loses semis, eyes Bronze

Two bronze medals in as many Olympics is indeed special, said former Indian hockey skipper and two-time Olympian Jude Felix Sebastian after India beat Spain 2-1 in a bronze medal match at Paris Olympics on Thursday. Two bronze medals in as many Olympics is indeed special, said former Indian hockey skipper and two-time Olympian Jude Felix Sebastian after India beat Spain 2-1 in a bronze medal match at Paris Olympics on Thursday.

PHOTO: SALAR

PSI's death: State announces Rs 50L, govt job to wife

KOPPAL, 8 AUG

Home Minister G Parameshwara has announced an ex-gratia of Rs 50 lakh and a government job to the wife of a police sub-inspector, who died under suspicious circumstances on 4 August.

Parameshwara on Wednesday ruled out a CBI investigation, saying that a CID probe was enough into the death of the SI, Parashuram. Yadgir Congress MLA Channareddy Tannur and his son Pampanagouda Tannur have been booked on a complaint by Parashuram's wife Shwetha NV that they were responsible for his death as they had allegedly got her husband transferred within seven months of his getting a posting. She accused Reddy and his son of demanding Rs 30 lakh from her husband if he wished to continue in same place. *—PTI*

Groom succumbs to injuries after killing bride

KOLAR, 8 AUG

A Kolar man accused of murdering his wife on their wedding night succumbed to his injuries on Thursday.

Naveen Kumar, 29, died at Jalappa Hospital, a day after the gruesome attack on his 19-year-old bride, Likithashree. The couple had exchanged vows on Wednesday but their marital bliss was shattered within hours. Naveen and Likhita had a love-cum-arranged marriage in Chambarasabahalli in Kolar Gold Fields.

Naveen took Likhita and his in-laws to his uncle's house where they were served refreshments. A few minutes later, Naveen and Likitha went inside a room and closed the door. A few minutes later, the relatives saw Naveen attacking Likitha with a sickle. Naveen later tried to end his life. *—Salar News*

Chamarajnagar Jalapatha Utsav to start tomorrow

MYSURU, 8 AUG

The fourth edition of 'Jalapatha Utsav' (festival of waterfalls), a cultural extravaganza organised by Chamarajnagar district administration, will be held at Bharachukki near Shivanasamudra in Kollegal taluk on Saturday. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is expected to inaugurate the event along with ministers HC Mahadevappa and K Venkatesh in the presence of Kollegal MLA AR Krishnamurthy and Chamarajanagar MLA CS Puttarangashetty.

Chamarajnagar Additional Deputy Commissioner Geeta Hudeda said district administration is organising the festival under Cheluva Chamarajnagar Tourism Promotion Programme to boost tourism. *—Salar News*

Police constable risks life to nab notorious thief

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

A Bengaluru City police constable, Doddalingaiah, put his life at risk to apprehend a thief by jumping in front of a speeding two-wheeler and being dragged for several metres.

The thief, Manjesh Achari, 40, hails from Hesaraghatta. According to the CCTV footage, the thief was rushing on his bike when the constable intercepted him at Sadashivanagar traffic junction in Bengaluru. The incident happened on Tuesday but police gave out the details only on Thursday. The thief tried to flee on his two-wheelers but Doddalingaiah held on tight to the man's and was dragged for 20 metres on the road. Lingayya held on until backup arrived.

Manjesha, a resident of Hesaraghatta, had a lengthy criminal record of almost 40 cases against him across Karnataka. *—Salar News with Agencies*

CM flays NDA over Waqf Bill, says it's against minorities

Central govt is neither for secularism nor social justice: CM

The NDA government is totally against the minorities in this country, they are not for secularism, they are not for social justice. We have been telling the people of the country that they are communal parties, they are casteists, that's why they are doing like that
-Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday flayed NDA government over its plan to amend the law governing Waqf boards, saying the move shows that it's against minorities.

The Bill has proposed far-reaching changes in the present Act, including ensuring the representation of Muslim women and non-Muslims in such bodies.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill also seeks to rename the Waqf Act, 1995, as the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act, 1995.

"The NDA government is totally against the minorities in this country, they are not for secularism, they are not for social justice. We have been telling the people of the country that they are communal parties, they are casteists, that's why they are doing like that," Siddaramaiah said.

According to its statement of objects and reasons, the Bill seeks to omit Section 40 of the current law relating to the powers of the Board to decide if a property is waqf property.

. *—PTI*

CM pays tributes to Nijalingappa

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah paid tributes to former chief minister S Nijalingappa on Thursday, commemorating his contributions towards Karnataka's development. "Nijalingappa was instrumental in shaping modern Karnataka. His leadership extended beyond his tenure as Chief Minister, influencing Congress party as its President," Siddaramaiah said after laying a wreath at his statue in front of Vidhana Soudha. *—Salar News*

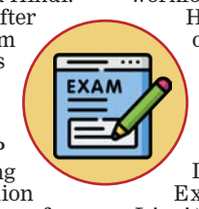
BETTER INCLUSIVITY

Loco Pilot Exam to be also in Kannada

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

South Western Railway (SWR) Zone has said Assistant Loco Pilot (Promotion) exam will now be offered in Kannada alongside English and Hindi.

The decision came after strong opposition from various quarters against the exam being available only in English and Hindi along with BJP MP Tejasvi Surya sending a formal request to Union Minister of State for Railways V Somanna. The exam was initially postponed due to these concerns. Somanna then held a meeting with South Western Railway officials, advocating for the inclusion of Kannada in railway examinations.



Somanna said on X, "This initiative aims to enhance accessibility for our talented workforce."

However, the current order applies exclusively to this particular exam. Calls for broader language inclusion in all railway exams, including General Division Competitive Examination and Limited Division Competitive Examination, are yet to be addressed. Somanna said efforts are underway to incorporate Kannada in future examinations. *—Salar News*

DKS to hold grievance meets

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Thursday he will visit Kanakapura on second and fourth Saturdays of every month to redress problems facing the people of Bengaluru South district.

He said he will receive pleas from people on those two days. "It is inconvenient for the people of Bengaluru South district to visit me in Bengaluru. Hence, I have decided to go to their doorstep to listen to their problems," Shivakumar said.

Cabinet decided to rename Ramanagara district as Bengaluru South district. The district comprises Ramanagara, Magadi, Kanakapura, Channapatna and Harohalli Taluks. *—Salar News*

Andhra Pradesh DyCM Pawan Kalyan was felicitated by Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre, in Bengaluru on Thursday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

State, Andhra sign MoU on human-wildlife issues

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre on Thursday said State government and Andhra Pradesh have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on a formal institutional arrangement between the forest departments of the two States to minimise human-wildlife conflict.

The two States have agreed to deploy an expert team for elephant capture, mahout training programmes in running elephant camps, knowledge transfer, Standard Operating Procedures for darting, capturing (animals) , nutrition and food, and workshops and seminars, the minister said after a meeting with Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh K Pawan Kalyan, who holds the forest portfolio.

Kalyan met Khandre in the City to resolve issues arising out of elephant movement between the two States. "Andhra Pradesh has requested for eight kumki (trained captive) elephants. We need to have a coordination between the two states," he said.*—PTI*

'Cancel shop licence if tobacco is sold near school'

MANGALURU, 8 AUG

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Dakshina Kannada D Santhosh Kumar on Thursday ordered the authorities to take stern action against shopkeepers selling cigarettes and tobacco products within a 100-metre radius of schools and colleges.

"If the shopkeepers are found violating the sections of COTPA (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003), officials must take action mercilessly and cancel their trade licences" he said.

He was addressing a district-level coordination meeting under the National Tobacco Control Programme for the year 2024-25 held at the district office on 8 August.

He gave the order to the Mangaluru city corporation officials and asked them to submit a monthly report to Deputy Commissioner. *—PTI*

TROUBLE BREWS

Private plaint filed in court against CM

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

A private complaint was filed on Thursday against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Special Court for Elected Representatives here over the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority site allotment 'scam'.

The complainant -- Mysuru-based activist Snehamai Krishna -- has alleged the Chief Minister's involvement in the 'scam.'

Siddaramaiah had misused his powers, the complainant alleged and sought a direction from the court for an inquiry against him by the CBI or any independent investigation agency.

The Chief Minister said he has "strength to reply to false complaints."

"False cases can't stand before the law," Siddaramaiah told reporters in Mysuru. *—PTI*

HAND OVER PROBE TO CBI: BJP MLC

MYSURU, 8 AUG

BJP MLC N Ravikumar on Thursday urged Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to hand over the probe into MUDA scam to CBI if he has moral right.

BJP has no faith in the probe handled by State government and it has been demanding to hand over the probe into the scams at MUDA and Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation to CBI, he said here.

Meanwhile, MLC Yathindra Siddaramaiah on Thursday said the question of Siddaramaiah resigning from his post doesn't arise at all as he did not commit any fraud, nor illegally obtain any sites. . *—Salar News*

CM, Dy CM get summons in protest case

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

A Bengaluru court on Thursday issued summons to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar asking them to appear personally before it on 29 August in a case related to their participation in a protest against the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) repeatedly questioning Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case more than two years ago.

The protest was organised by the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee in June 2022 against 'unnecessary harassment' of Rahul Gandhi by the ED in connection with the case.

Defying restrictive orders, the Congress leaders, including Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, had staged the demonstration. *—PTI*

Bengaluru-Mangaluru train services resume

MANGALURU, 8 AUG

The South Western Railway (SWR) resumed passenger train services on the Bengaluru-Mangaluru sector on Thursday.

The traffic on this line was disrupted due to landslides in the Sakleshpur-Subramanya sector on 26 July. The tracks that were covered with the debris were cleared by the Railways.

According to railway officials, the first train to pass through the restored section was Train No 16575, the Yeshwantpur-Mangaluru Junction Gomateshwara tri-weekly Express.

Overnight trains from Bengaluru and Vijayapura will resume soon. The return services from Mangaluru, Karwar, and Mangaluru Junction will start from Friday. However, trains on the affected stretch between Yadakumari and Kadagaravalli will operate at reduced speeds of 15 kmph until further notice.

The restoration task was challenging, taking nearly 10 days to complete due to the inaccessibility of the stretch by road and frequent rain disruptions.

Despite these challenges, dedicated teams worked tirelessly to restore the track, which was certified 'fit' on 4 August.

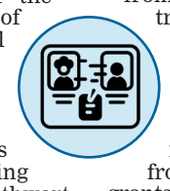
The first passenger train, the Gomateshwara Express, successfully passed through the restored section on Thursday amid cheers from the workforce present on the site. `*—PTI*

PHOTO: X@ABHISH656

Police beef up security over Bangladeshis' influx

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

Bengaluru City police and Intelligence Bureau are on high alert to monitor the possible arrival of Bangladeshi illegal immigrants following the tense political situation in Bangladesh.



Security personnel were keeping a hawk's eye on trains arriving from Kolkata in a bid to thwart any attempts by Bangladeshi trying to enter the City.

Railway Protection Force has beefed up security at Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal (SMVT) in Baiyyapanahalli from where most of the trains to Howrah in West Bengal originate and terminate.

Police teams were also conducting checks in parts of the City, including Bellandur, from where illegal immigrants from Bangladesh were arrested earlier. *—Salar News*

FLORAL TREAT

216th Lalbagh flower show celebrates Ambedkar's legacy

BENGALURU, 8 AUG

The 216th edition of Lalbagh flower show started here on Thursday, marking a tribute to Dr BR Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. The show, which runs from 8 to 19 August, gave a floral tribute to Ambedkar's life and achievements.

Inaugurating the event, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said: "Dr BR Ambedkar believed that regardless of caste, religion, language and region, all people should be given equal opportunities. He also believed that people can attain political freedom only when they achieve economic and social freedom. This year's flower show has provided a unique opportunity for people to understand the aspirations of the Constitution."

More than 200 types of flowers, totalling around 35 lakh blooms, have been put up in the show, with contributions from Andhra Pradesh, Ooty and Tamil Nadu. Notable flowers on display include anthurium, lilies, orchids and gerberas, alongside international varieties.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah inaugurates the flower show at Lalbagh Botanical Garden in Bengaluru on Thursday

PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD

The show is expected to attract around 12 lakh visitors, with ticket prices set at Rs 70 on weekdays and Rs 80 on weekends for adults, while children's tickets are priced at Rs 30. To manage the large influx of visitors online ticketing has been introduced.

Dr Bhimrao Yashwant Ambedkar, the grandson of BR Ambedkar, took part in the inauguration. "Babasaheb's life story has been depicted through plants and flowers," he said. *—Salar News*

TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

In light of Lalbagh Flower Show, Department of Horticulture has announced traffic and parking arrangements to manage the influx of visitors.

DESIGNATED PARKING AREAS

1. Dr Marigowda Road: Parking for two-wheelers is available on Al-Ameen College premises. Hopcoms parking lot can be used for parking both two-wheelers and four-wheelers.

2. KH Road: BMTC multi-storey parking lot at Shantinagar is available for two-wheelers and four-wheelers.

3. JC Road: Corporation Parking Lot is designated for two-wheelers and four-wheeler

PROHIBITED PARKING ZONES

1. Dr Marigowda Road: Parking is prohibited from Lalbagh main gate to NIMHANS on both sides of the road.

2. KH Road: No parking is allowed from KH Circle to Shanthinagar Junction on both sides of Double Road.

3. Lalbagh Road: Parking is banned from Subbaiah Circle to Lalbagh main gate on both sides.

4. Siddaiah Road: Parking is restricted from Urvashi Theater Junction to Wilson Garden 12th Cross, on both sides.

5. BTS Road: No parking from BMTC Junction towards Post Office.

6. Krumbigal Road: Parking is prohibited on both sides of the road.

7. Lalbagh West Gate to RV Teachers College

8. RV Teachers College to Ashoka Pillar

9. Ashoka Pillar to Siddapura Junction: The visitors are encouraged to utilise public transportation options such as the metro, BMTC buses, or cabs to reach the event.

Oppn opposes Waqf Bill; calls it attack on Muslims

Muslim bodies also urge the Centre to withdraw the Bill

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

The Opposition on Thursday strongly protested against the introduction of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha, with several INDIA bloc MPs calling it an attack on the Constitution and aimed at targeting Muslims.

They also urged the government to withdraw the bill.

Soon after Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju sought leave to introduce the bill, Congress MP KC Venugopal -- who had submitted notice to oppose its introduction -- accused the government of violating freedom of religion and attacking the federal system through it.

"This is a draconian law and a fundamental attack on the Constitution," Venugopal said.

He said people taught the BJP a lesson for its divisive politics but it was continuing with the same, keeping in mind the upcoming assembly elections in states such as Haryana and Maharashtra.

AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi speaks in the Lok Sabha in New Delhi, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

"It is a direct attack on freedom of religion ... Next you will go for Christians, then Jains," he said.

Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav said the bill was being introduced to appease BJP's hardcore supporters.

"What is the point of including non-Muslims in Waqf boards when this is not done in other religious bodies?" Yadav asked.

Muslim bodies react

Prominent Muslim bodies urged the government to withdraw the proposed amendments and engage in a detailed consultation with all stakeholders, including religious leaders.

Both factions of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (Arshad Madani and Mahmood Madani) slammed the Bill and expressed grave concerns over the proposed legislation.

—PTI

'LADAKH COUNCILS HAVE DECISION MAKING POWERS'

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

The democratic representation and decision-making powers of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs) have been retained following the formation of the Union Territory of Ladakh in 2019, the government informed Parliament on Thursday.

These LAHDCs continue to exercise executive powers over different subjects within their respective districts, the government also said in response to a query regarding the extension of tribal area status to the Union Territory (UT).

The LAHDCs in Leh and Kargil function as District Planning and Development Boards and prepare plans for different programmes and policies. They reflect the demands and aspirations of the local population, Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikey said.

Ulaka and Punia had asked whether the government intends to extend the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution to Ladakh, and the reasons behind the delay in granting tribal area status to the UT.

—PTI

Oppn seeks crop MSP for farmers, protest on Parl premises

Opposition leaders on Thursday held a protest on the Parliament premises, demanding that farmers' crops be bought at MSP and justice ensured for them. MPs from parties such as the Trinamool Congress (TMC), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) - Sharadchandra Pawar, and the Shiv Sena (UBT), among others, protested on the steps leading to the Makar Dwar of Parliament. The MPs wore a garland of vegetables and raised slogans such as "Kisan ko phasal pe MSP do" and "Kisan pe anyay bandh karo". *—PTI*

Dhankhar walks out of RS amid uproar over Phogat row

The uneasy relations between Rajya Sabha Chairman and Opposition parties once again surfaced on Thursday, as Jagdeep Dhankhar left the House after heated clashes with TMC leader and some other Opposition MPs who were not permitted to raise the issue of disqualification of Vinesh Phogat from the Paris Olympics. Trouble started when Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sought to raise the Phogat disqualification issue but Chairman Dhankhar did not allow it. This followed an angry exchange between the Chair and TMC leader Derek O'Brien. However, Dhankhar did not allow Kharge to raise the issue and went ahead with the scheduled Zero Hour listings. O'Brien stood up to raise his point, but could not be heard because of uproar in the House. *—PTI*

ED attaches ₹113cr assets of RJD realty promoter

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Seventy acres of land and flats in Gurugram, a few dwelling units in Mumbai, a farmhouse in Delhi and fixed deposits worth about Rs 113 crore of Amit Katyal, an alleged "close associate" of RJD Chief Lalu Prasad's family, and his realty companies have been attached under the anti-money laundering law, ED said Thursday. A provisional order was issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act on 6 August to attach the properties worth Rs 113.03 crore in the case of Amit Katyal, Krrish Realtech Pvt. Ltd. and Brahma City Pvt. Ltd. Katyal was arrested by the central agency last year in a separate money laundering case related to the railways alleged land-for-jobs scam involving. *—PTI*

Cops post posters of Al-Qaeda, Khalistan terrorists

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Ahead of the Independence Day celebrations in the national capital, Delhi Police has heightened the security arrangements and put up posters of various terrorists linked with Al Qaeda and Khalistan. Police have put up posters across the city and they have also encouraged people to assist them in catching the terrorists. The Delhi police said that those coming forward with any information regarding the terrorists will be rewarded "suitably". The names of informants will, however, are concealed. Police said that the security measures are taken to raise awareness among the people and help police track the terrorists. *—PTI*

MLA slaps official for `faulty' autos for specially-abled

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 8 AUG

Maharashtra MLA and former minister Omprakash alias Bachchu Kadu on Thursday slapped an official of an e-rickshaw manufacturing firm here for allegedly supplying faulty rickshaws to specially-abled people. Kadu, an independent legislator from Achalpur who heads the Prachar Janshakti party and supports the ruling alliance in the State, was here for a rally. Some specially-abled people met him outside the guest house where he was staying and complained that they had been provided faulty e-rickshaws under a government scheme. An official of the firm which manufactured the rickshaws was also present. A news channel aired a video showing Kadu hitting the man during the conversation. He himself took a ride in one of the rickshaws and found that it had problems, he said. No police complaint had been registered by any person yet. *—PTI*

ECI delegation led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar arrives to review poll preparedness, in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir **PHOTO: PTI**

EC in J&K as SC deadline for election nears

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

With the Supreme Court deadline for holding Assembly polls looming large, the Election Commission (EC) held a series of meetings in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday with political parties and district heads of the civil administration and police in order to get a feedback for holding the election.

The EC team, led by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar and including election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu, met representatives of registered political parties, including the National Conference (NC), People's Democratic Party (PDP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress and Jammu and Kashmir Panthers Party (JKPP), at the International Convention Centre (SKICC) here. Immediate Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir was the dominant demand of all the political leaders who met the visiting EC team.

Assembly polls have not been held in Jammu and Kashmir since 2014. The polls were due to be held in early 2019 following the dissolution of the legislative body of the erstwhile state in 2018.

However, after the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into Union territories in August 2019, the Assembly polls could not be held due to various reasons, including a delimitation exercise that was completed in 2022.

Talking to reporters after party-wise meetings with the EC delegation, the leaders said they were unanimous in their demand for immediate Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile, MoS Ramdas Athawale said that Jammu and Kashmir's statehood maybe restored and assembly elections may take place there in October,

"Assembly elections are scheduled to be held in Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jharkhand perhaps in October. So the announcement on the restoration of statehood as well as the conduct of assembly election could perhaps take place in October," Athawale, the Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, said at a press conference here.

He appealed to the people to come out to vote in large numbers when the election takes place. *—PTI*

Ajit gets into poll mode with 'Jan Sanman Yatra'

NASHIK, 8 AUG

Ajit Pawar **PHOTO: PTI**

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Thursday kicked off his party's 'Jan Sanman Yatra' and said he was embarking on a religious journey since he considered people god and himself as their "jan sevak" (servant of the masses).

The NCP president started the yatra from Dindori here ahead of the assembly polls, which is likely to be held in October.

"I am starting the yatra from today and I feel like I am on a religious journey. For someone committed for the welfare of the people, people are like God. I am not a king, I am a servant of the people and will do everything possible to improve their lives. This yatra is called Jan Sanman Yatra as I have been in politics for 33 years and have presented many people-friendly budgets," he told the gathering.

"Through Ladki Bahin Yojana the government is going to empower the mothers and daughters of the state by directly transferring money into their accounts. This will help women stand on their own feet and live with self-respect. I have allotted Rs 46,00 crore for the scheme," he said while attacking the opposition for creating "falsehoods" about it.

These parties want to the shut the scheme since they are anti-women and do not want to see them empowered, Pawar alleged."I signed a file to allocate Rs 6,000 crore for women yesterday itself. We are making efforts that the first instalment of the scheme for July and August will be given on 17 August before Raksha Bandhan (19 August)," he told the gathering.

The state has a budget of Rs 6.5 lakh crore and the state government will ensure there will be no hurdles for this scheme, Pawar said, adding it was his "promise" to the people.

—PTI

India likely to gain $250M in garment exports amid B'desh crisis

KOLKATA, 8 AUG

India can be a beneficiary in the international readymade garment markets as Bangladesh, the world's second-largest exporter in the sector, grapples with economic challenges, amid ongoing political unrest there, according to a report released on Thursday.

India could gain monthly export orders worth USD 200-250 million in the short term, a CareEdge study said.

While Bangladesh has historically captured a significant portion of China's declining share in global readymade garment (RMG) exports, India has been unable to fully capitalise on the opportunity, it said.

"If the unrest in Bangladesh persists for an extended period, it could result in a significant shift in export orders towards India. Industry estimates suggest India could gain monthly export orders worth USD 200-250 million in the short term and around USD 300-350 million in the medium term," the rating agency said in its observation.

Trade between India and Bangladesh through Petrapole land port in West Bengal, resumed Thursday morning amid tight security, officials said. Meanwhile, the Meghalaya government has temporarily suspended business operations at the border haats along the international border with Bangladesh due to the volatile situation in that country, officials said on Thursday. *—PTI*

Members of the Shurveer Jammu Sangathan demonstrate over the alleged attacks on 'Bangladeshi Hindus', in Jammu, Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

UK Foreign Secy dials EAM over Hasina's next move

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

The United Kingdom (UK) remains in contact with India to "monitor and respond" to the events in Bangladesh, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said on Thursday following a phone call between the foreign ministers of the two countries.

It came after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on social media that his UK counterpart, Foreign Secretary David Lammy, called him on Wednesday during which the pair "discussed the situation in Bangladesh and West Asia".

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office sources only confirmed that the call took place without shedding any further light on deposed Bangladeshi prime minister Sheikh Hasina's rumoured London travel plans.

—PTI

Fake audio clip of Biren released to derail peace: Govt

IMPHAL, 8 AUG

The Manipur government has said that an audio clip, falsely claiming to be the voice of Chief Minister N Biren Singh, was released on social media in an attempt to derail peace initiatives in the ethnic violence-affected state.

The police began an investigation to find out the source of the purported clip in which some offensive comments against a community were heard. "It has come to notice of the government that an audio recording, falsely claiming to be that of the Chief Minister, Manipur, is being circulated on social media platforms.

"This doctored audio is a malicious attempt by certain sections to incite communal violence or derail the process of peace that has been initiated at multiple levels," the state government said in a statement. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups in Manipur since May last year. *—PTI*

Uddhav meets Sonia, Sunita in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Shiv Sena-UBT chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday met former Congress president Sonia Gandhi here.

The meeting came a day after Thackeray met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi to discuss the strategy for the upcoming Maharashtra assembly elections.

Shiv Sena-UBT, Congress and NCP-SCP have announced that they would contest the elections together as the Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition.

Earlier, the former Maharashtra chief minister also met former law minister and Rajya Sabha member Kapil Sibal here.

Thackeray returned to Mumbai after a three-day visit to the national capital late Thursday evening.

He also visited Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's home and met his wife Sunita Kejriwal. AAP Rajya Sabha members Sanjay Singh and Raghav Chadha were also present during the meeting.

"Singh alleged that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) were the government's weapons against opposition to suppress its voice.

—PTI

Shiv Sena Chief Uddhav Thackeray with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita and leader Sanjay Singh, in New Delhi, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Court extends Kejri's custody

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

A Delhi court on Thursday extended the judicial custody of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal till 20 August in a corruption case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the alleged excise scam. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja extended the Chief Minister's custody after he was produced before the court through video conference. The court is however likely to consider on 12 August a supplementary charge sheet filed by the CBI against Kejriwal in the case.

—PTI

STALWART IN BENGAL POLITICS

Bhattacharjee: The man who rebranded WB

KOLKATA, 8 AUG

Former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, who will be remembered both for his commitment to the communist ideology and a pragmatic approach to industrialising the state, passed away at the age of 80 at his residence here on Thursday.

Bhattacharjee, a stalwart of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), was known for his efforts to bring industrialisation to the state, an endeavour that, despite his best intentions, eventually led to the downfall of the Left Front government after 34 years of continuous rule.

Former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee was influenced by the intellectual and cultural milieu of Bengal **PHOTO: PTI**

Born on 1 March, 1944, into a scholarly family in North Kolkata, the CPI(M) leader was deeply influenced by the intellectual and cultural milieu of Bengal.

He joined the CPI(M) in the mid-1960s. Bhattacharjee briefly stepped away from politics in the early 1990s after resigning from the cabinet due to an altercation with a bureaucrat. His initiatives sparked significant controversy. The Singur project and police firing on protestors in Nandigram in 2007 further eroded the Left Front's support.

The 2011 state elections saw the Left Front's defeat by Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, ending Bhattacharjee's tenure and signalling a major shift in Bengal's politics. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Lawyer held for 'inciting' woman to self-immolate

LUCKNOW, 8 AUG

A day after a 30-year-old woman suffered severe burn injuries following a self-immolation bid near Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's residence in the Vikramaditya Marg area here, claiming torture by her husband and in-laws, police arrested her lawyer on Wednesday for allegedly inciting her for the act. The husband of the woman and his brother have already been arrested. According to a press statement issued by the Lucknow Police, Sunil Kumar, the woman's lawyer, was arrested for allegedly inciting her for the act. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Lucknow Central) Raveena Tyagi on Tuesday said Anjali Jatav, from Unnao district, had accused her husband and in-laws of subjecting her to physical as well as mental harassment. *—PTI*

Man dies by jumping before train in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

A 50-year-old man committed suicide by jumping in front of a train at Yamuna Bank metro station here, disrupting services briefly on the Blue Line, officials said. According to a suicide note recovered from the man's possession, he took the extreme step due to financial hardship and health issues, police said. "On Thursday, a call was received from the metro station controller, Yamuna Bank, that a man had jumped in front of a train. A police team rushed to the spot and the man was taken to LBS Hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead," a senior police officer said. The man was identified as Naveen, , the officer said. A suicide note was also recovered from his pocket in which he said that no one had forced him to take the extreme step. *—PTI*

CBI arrests ED official for taking Rs 20 lakh bribe

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

The CBI has arrested an assistant director of the ED for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 20 lakh from a Mumbai-based jeweller, officials said on Thursday. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had conducted searches at the jeweller's premises on 3 and 4 August, following which Assistant Director Sandeep Singh Yadav allegedly threatened to arrest the jeweller's son if he did not pay him Rs 25 lakh, according to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). During negotiations, the amount was reduced to Rs 20 lakh, the officials said. Yadav, who is an officer from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), was caught red-handed while accepting the bribe, they said. *—PTI*

17 hospitalised following gas leak in Pune

PUNE, 8 AUG

Seventeen workers of a food processing unit in the Yavat area of Pune district were hospitalised following an ammonia gas leak on Wednesday, police said. The unit located at Bhandgaon near Yavat manufactures ready-to-eat food and requires temperatures below 18 degrees Celsius, which is maintained using ammonia. "On Wednesday, ammonia leaked in one of the sections. At the time of the incident, 25 people, mostly women, were working," said Narayan Deshmukh, Senior Police Inspector at Yavat Police Station. "After the leak, the main regulator was switched off, and the affected workers were rushed to a hospital with complaints of breathlessness and uneasiness. Sixteen are stable. The woman who was directly exposed to the gas is currently undergoing treatment in the ICU. *—PTI*

Bihar mandates registration of temples, mutts, & trusts

State has about 2,499 registered temples & 2,512 unregistered

PATNA, 8 AUG

The Bihar government has directed all district magistrates (DM) to ensure that unregistered temples, mutts, and trusts in their respective areas are registered and details of their immovable assets are submitted to the Bihar State Board of Religious Trusts (BSBRT) for uploading on its website.

The BSBRT operates under the state's law department.

State Law Minister Nitin Nabin on Thursday said, "All DMs have been directed to ensure that unregistered temples, mutts, and trusts are registered on a priority basis."

He also instructed the DMs to ensure that details of immovable assets of all registered temples and mutts are promptly provided to the BSBRT for uploading on its website.

"I recently sent a letter to all DMs in this regard. So far, only 18 districts have submitted data to the BSBRT," he added.

There are approximately 2,512 unregistered temples and mutts in the state, owning 4,321.64 acres *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

A high-level meeting with officials from the Law and Revenue and Land Reforms departments will be convened to address these issues. Registration is mandatory to protect the property, including land, of both registered and unregistered temples from unauthorised claims, the minister said.

According to the latest data from BSBRT, there are approximately 2,512 unregistered temples and mutts in the state, owning 4,321.64 acres. The state has about 2,499 registered temples, which collectively own over 18,456 acres.

According to data, the highest numbers of unregistered temples and mutts are in Vaishali (438), followed by Kaimur Bhabhua (307), West Champaran (273), Bhagalpur (191), Begusarai (185), Saran (154), and Gaya (152). *—PTI*

ACROSS 5 CATEGORIES

Govt waives off clinical trial for several int'l drugs

There will also be a considerable reduction in the cost of various advanced medicines *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

The government has waived the requirement for clinical trials of certain categories of drugs in India if they are approved in the US, the UK, Japan, Australia, Canada and the European Union.

The waiver only covers five categories -- orphan drugs for rare diseases, gene and cellular therapy products, new drugs used in pandemic situations, new drugs used for special defence purposes and new drugs having significant therapeutic advances over the current standard care.

This waiver would ensure expeditious availability of the latest medicines for treating diseases like cancers, rare diseases like Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMA), and autoimmune conditions in India.

"As per Rule 101 of New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, the Central Licensing Authority, with the approval of the Central Government, may specify, by an order, the name of the countries, from time to time, for considering waiver of local clinical trial for approval of new drugs under Chapter X and for grant of permission for conduct of clinical trial under Chapter V of the said rules," the Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI) said in an order issued on 7 August.

- Presently, several medicines already approved by other regulatory authorities in the US, the UK and the EU are not immediately available for Indian patients

Presently, several medicines already approved by other regulatory authorities in the US, the UK and the EU are not immediately available for Indian patients because of certain regulatory requirements under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and rules made thereunder.

However, Rule 101 of the New Drugs and Clinical Trials, 2019, allows the DCGI to specify certain countries for considering waiver of local clinical trials for approval of new drugs.

Besides, there will be a considerable reduction in the cost of various advanced medicines. *—PTI*

No rain relief for HP, 'orange alert' issued

SHIMLA, 8 AUG

The Met office issued an 'orange' warning on Thursday for heavy to very rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorm and lightning, at isolated places in Himachal Pradesh during the weekend.

It also warned of a low to moderate flash flood risk in isolated parts of Sirmaur, Chamba, Shimla, Kullu and Mandi districts in the next 24 hours amid an active monsoon current in the state.

The rainfall deficit in the state during the ongoing monsoon that began on 1 June stood at 29 per cent till 8 August.

The state received 307.9 mm rainfall against an average of 435.5 mm during this period.

The rainfall since Wednesday led to the closure of 109 roads -- 37 in Mandi, 29 in Shimla, 26 in Kullu, six in Kangra, four in Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti each, two in Sirmaur and one in Hamirpur district.

The Met office has warned of the possibility of landslides and flash floods in some places, as well as damage to plantations, crops, vulnerable structures and kutcha houses due to strong winds and waterlogging in low-lying areas.

94 people have been killed in rain-related incidents and the state suffered losses of about Rs 787 crores between 27 June and 7 August, officials said.

Meanwhile, heavy rains in Uttar Pradesh have led to the water levels in the Ganga river rising and submerging Ghats on Thursday morning. *—PTI*

Designs of vulnerable dams under radar

New Delhi, 8 Aug

The government said it will review the design of all existing and under-construction dams vulnerable to Glacial Lake Outburst Floods, ensuring these have adequate spillway capacity to handle flood scenarios. A glacial lake outburst flood is caused by the failure of a dam containing a glacial lake. *—PTI*

Dorothy's Seat, Nainital's famous tourist spot also known as Tiffin Top, has collapsed following a landslide caused by heavy rain on Thursday. Deep cracks had developed in the hill leading to Tiffin Top causing Dorothy's Seat, to crack as well *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

KERALA LANDSLIDES: SEARCH OPERATIONS CONTINUE FOR 10TH DAY

WAYANAD, 8 AUG

Search operations in the landslides-hit areas of this north Kerala district continued for the 10th day with more cadaver dogs being pressed into service on Thursday. The Army, which led the search and rescue operations and also built the Bailey bridge to connect areas isolated in the disaster decided to partially withdraw. Kerala High Court registered a case on its own. A bench of justices AK Jayasankaran Nambiar and VM Syam Kumar directed to register a case based on media reports. Alleged conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar contributes Rs 15 crore and offers to construct 300 houses. *—PTI*

SC asks the Centre to resolve these issues at the earliest *PHOTO: PTI*

SC pulls up Centre over dist judges' pending pension

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Supreme Court on Thursday flagged issues pertaining to meagre pension being given to district judges, and asked the Centre to resolve these at the earliest.

"We, being the guardian of the district judiciary, urge you (the attorney general and the solicitor general) to sit together with the amicus curiae and find a way out," a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said.

Some of these are "extremely hard cases", the CJI said and referred to a case of a district judge, who was suffering from cancer, and said that several petitions are being filed by district judges in the top court raising pension-related grievances.

"District judges are only getting Rs 15,000 as pension. District judges come to high courts and generally they are elevated to HCs at the age of 56 and 57 years and they retire with pension of Rs 30,000 per month," the bench also comprising justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said.

- District judges are only getting Rs 15,000 as pension. District judges come to high courts and generally they are elevated to HCs at the age of 56 and 57

The CJI said very few high court judges get arbitration matters and moreover, at the age of 60 years, they cannot go for the legal practice.

On 10 January, the top court, in its verdict, had said there was a need to maintain uniformity in service conditions of judicial officers across the country.

SNJPC recommendations cover pay structure, pension and family pension and allowances, besides dealing with the issue of establishing a permanent mechanism to determine subjects of service conditions of the district judiciary. *—PTI*

Serial killer on loose in UP, 9 women killed in 14 months

BAREILLY, 8 AUG

A strangler on loose has sent locals in the Shahi-Sheeshgarh area in a grip of fear, with the police bereft of a solid lead and clutching onto a few sketches in way of clue to get to the serial killer who has taken nine lives.

Nine women have been killed in the Shahi-Sheeshgarh area since last year and police suspect they all have been perpetrated by the same person who strangled all his/her victims, at least one, by her own saree.

The latest victim, Anita Devi from Haujpur village, was found strangled on July 2, a year since the first murder took place on 22 July last year, when Kusma from Khajuria village met a similar fate.

The lack of leads has prompted Bareilly Range's Inspector General of Police Rakesh Singh to take direct command of the investigation.

"All nine murders share a similar nature. The local police have not been able to crack the case, and this inactivity cannot continue," Singh said on Wednesday.

The timeline of these murders paint a grim picture. According to police, the second victim in the series was Veeravati from Seva Jwalapur village, who was strangled on August 23 last year.

Mehmoodan, an elderly woman, was found in a sugarcane field on 31 October, 2023.

The fourth victim in the case was Dulaaro Devi, from Kharsaini village. Her body was found on 20 November the same year, followed by Urmila Devi from Jagdishpur village who was strangled with her own sari on 26 November. *—PTI*

Sketches of suspects released by UP police *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Inspect, renovate toilets in jails: HC directs Delhi govt

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the city government to renovate and repair toilets in all jail complexes in the capital within four months after inspecting condition.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan noted that as per a report filed by 'Inspecting Judges of Tihar Jail', the state of the washrooms was not satisfactory, with cleaning work being done by some inmates voluntarily. The court asked the authorities to hire adequate manpower, including on contract, for cleaning washrooms in each jail complex, and also pay minimum wages fixed for unskilled labour to those inmates who are voluntarily doing the cleaning work.

The court's order came while dealing with a public interest litigation alleging manual scavenging in Tihar Jail. The court asked the government to file an action taken report in eight weeks and listed hearing in October. *—PTI*

SC to hear on NEET-PG postponment today

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Supreme Court agreed to hear on Friday a plea seeking postponement of the NEET-PG examination, scheduled for 11 August, which claimed that candidates have been allocated cities that are highly inconvenient for them to reach.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Thursday took note of the submissions of lawyer Anas Tanwir on the issue.

The bench said the matter will be listed on Friday.

The plea said many candidates have been allocated cities which are highly inconvenient for them to reach. It said the test cities were allotted on July 31 and the specific centres will be declared on 8 August.

While the allocation of the centres was done to curb malpractices, the plea said due to the paucity of time, it is difficult for the candidates to make arrangements for travel to specific cities.

National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-Postgraduate exam was initially supposed to be held on 23 June. It was postponed by the Union Health Ministry as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of alleged irregularities in certain competitive exams. *—PTI*

BATTLE MODE ON

Kerala to study rise in amoebic brain fever

T'PURAM, 8 AUG

Kerala government has decided to conduct a scientific study to determine the reasons behind the increasing cases of amoebic meningoencephalitis (amoebic brain fever) in the state.

As seven cases of the disease known for its high mortality rate have been reported in Thiruvananthapuram district, the government has taken the decision to commission a study to find out what is causing this unprecedented spread of infection.

One person died of amoebic brain fever on 23 July and two more cases are suspected.

Efforts are made to determine the source of disease *PHOTO: PTI*

Health Minister Veena George said at a press conference that various departments, including health and environment, will collaborate on the study to examine the factors contributing to the rising number of cases.

The study will also investigate whether climate change has played a role.

A medical board will be formed to ensure continuous treatment for the six patients currently undergoing treatment for amoebic meningoencephalitis at the Government Medical College Hospital in Thiruvananthapuram.

Efforts are being made to determine the source of the disease in another patient. Experts suspect that contaminated water from the soil in the well of his home, which was being cleaned, may have given him the infection. *—PTI*

RAINS REVIVE DRY RIVER

In a rare and joyous spectacle, the arid landscape of Barmer was transformed as Luni River came alive, flowing through Samdari town after three days of incessant rain. Locals, ecstatic at the sight, erupted in celebration, marking only the second time in five years that the river has graced their land. Known as the 'Maruganga' or the Ganga of Rajasthan, the Luni River originates in the Aravali ranges of Ajmer and traverses nine districts before merging into Gujarat's Rann of Kutch. However, its journey rarely extends to Barmer, even during heavy rainfall.
PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Landslide early warnings still an uphill battle

Just a fortnight before the deadly landslide in Wayanad this July, the Central government activated a new landslide early warning system (LEWS) for three regions in the country. The system, developed by the Geological Survey of India (GSI), was designed to predict the likelihood of landslides based on rainfall data.

The early warning system (EWS) is currently operational in landslide-prone areas like Kalimpong and Darjeeling in West Bengal and Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu; the government aims to expand it nationwide by 2030. The system is crucial, as India experiences a high number of rainfall-induced landslides each year. An EWS generates and shares timely information to mitigate the impacts of disasters like landslides, involving risk knowledge, monitoring and warning, dissemination and communication and response capability. For example, EWS can forecast or predict landslides regionally or on specific slopes. GSI focuses on regional systems and is working to operationalise a rainfall-induced LEWS prototype, which was developed between 2016 and 2021 by nine partners from India, the United Kingdom and Italy as part of the LANDSLIP project.

Landslide early warning system currently operational in landslide-prone areas like Kalimpong and Darjeeling in West Bengal and Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu ***PHOTOS: PTI***

How the system works

To make a forecast, scientists must first create susceptibility maps, which estimate the likelihood of landslides in a given area after considering the local terrain, soil type and environmental conditions. These maps only show where landslides are likely to occur but do not provide an estimate of the magnitude or expected duration.

Many other factors can affect landslide risk. "Examples include an area's geology, soil types, vegetation types and human infrastructure like roads and buildings. Prior knowledge of where landslides have occurred is key to better understanding landslide susceptibility, Malamud added.

In 2014, GSI launched the National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping, which covers 0.42 million square kilometres of landslide-prone areas in the country on a scale of 1:50,000. A unit of distance on the map equals 50,000 units of distance on the ground. It considers slopes, vegetation, slope-forming material and geology. LANDSLIP will use this database as a base map and update it as it receives new information.

The second step involves forecasting. The project created a short-term (24-48 hours) rainfall forecast and a medium-range (next 10 days) forecast based on weather patterns in the Nilgiris and Darjeeling.

To make short-term forecasts, researchers use models to calculate rainfall thresholds, determining how much rain is needed to trigger a landslide. Originally developed in Italy, these models were adapted for use in India. For a region with specific geology and geography that has experienced a landslide, the model considers the intensity and duration of rainfall.

If researchers lack data for a specific place, they use information from similar regions. If both areas experience similar rainfall, the model can estimate landslide risks.

For medium-term forecasts, the LANDSLIP team identified 30 weather patterns linked to landslides. These patterns, covering the main monsoonal and non-monsoonal types, were tested for their ability to explain rainfall differences, according to a 2019 study published in the International Journal of Climatology.

SaveTheHills, a Kalimpong-based non-governmental organisation, collaborated with LANDSLIP to provide landslide details in the Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalayas.

The LANDSLIP project also roped in social scientists to refine the prototype. Anshu Orga, an assistant professor at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi's School of Public Policy, visited the pilot sites several times while working as a postdoctoral researcher at King's College London.

She was involved with the project from 2018 to 2021 and was tasked with determining how to effectively govern and communicate early warnings.

What are the roadblocks

Operationalising a landslide early forecasting system is time-consuming and could take 8 to 20 years to map the environment, collect enough data on rainfall and past landslides and understand forecasting uncertainties, according to Malamud. The problem, he said, is not because we do not lack the knowledge to forecast if an area faces a higher or lower susceptibility to landslides. The real issue, according to him, is human power, money and expertise. Ghosh also stressed that this is a time-consuming process by drawing parallels between cyclone and landslide prediction. "In 1999, the Great Odisha Cyclone resulted in 14,000 fatalities. In 2024, we have smart cyclone warning systems and see hardly any loss of lives. But this journey took 25 long years," he explained. Landslides, he explained, are a much more difficult and complex system and the country has only recently entered this arena. Ghosh added that perfecting the system for improved accuracy will take time. Experts have identified one major issue: Data on rainfall and past landslides. Ghosh pointed to the same challenges, including fewer rainfall stations, automatic weather stations and automatic rain gauge stations in the hills. Another challenge in making accurate forecasts, according to Ghosh, is erratic patterns and increased frequency of high-intensity rainfall within a smaller area or catchment. Past landslide occurrences must also be studied in order to improve forecast accuracy. Scientists need to have answers to four main questions: Where and when landslides occur, their size and their type, said Malamud. A landslide early forecasting system, he said, is only going to be as good as the data.

—Courtesy, DownToEarth

SALAR ساہر

B'deshis spend sleepless night amid robbery fears

Several residents across Bangladesh spent a sleepless night as they gathered in groups to guard the streets amid fears of robbery and looting by criminals in the violence-hit country, where an interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus is all set to take oath on Thursday.

Security concerns have gripped the country since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster on Monday as police observed a work abstention, citing fears for their safety amid reports of deadly attacks on security personnel.

The Yunus-led interim government – appointed by President Mohammed Shahabuddin who had dissolved the parliament - is set to take oath in the evening after weeks of tumultuous student protests that forced Hasina to resign and flee the country.

The chaos and fear created by the deadly protests remained. Gangs of criminals have been looting and robbing homes in the absence of law enforcers over the last two days.

Many residents spent a sleepless night on Wednesday amid fears of robbery and looting. From one end of Dhaka to another, particularly Uttara to Mohammadpur, people were concerned about their safety.

Facebook users were posting in different groups and streaming live. Residents in many areas, including in Uttara and Mohammadpur, formed neighbourhood watch groups to stand guard, bdnews24.com news portal reported.

Nazvi Islam, a part-time teacher at Dhaka University and resident of Mohammadpur's Bosila, said that robbers had terrorised the area on Tuesday night. Mosques were regularly making announcements, asking everyone to remain on alert.

On Wednesday night, residents gathered in groups to guard the streets with sticks and bats. Hundreds of students from the local madrasa also came to guard the area. After standing watch all night, they returned home in the morning. The students divided themselves into small groups and guarded the government buildings and public properties. Zakirul Islam, a resident of Chanmia Housing in Mohammadpur, said guards were posted at the gates to the housing area on Wednesday night, but residents still could not sleep due to fear.

Abir Hossain, a resident of Mirpur-14, where many government officials live, says that everyone panicked when news spread that robbers had entered their housing complex.

"Last night, a group of people carrying local weapons came and attacked a neighbouring house. They forcefully opened the main gate and looted cash and jewellery," The Daily Star newspaper quoted a resident of the Naboday Housing area as saying.

Many Facebook users posted or live-streamed videos of robbers attacking a building in the ECB Chattar area adjacent to the Mirpur cantonment. Sounds of Army patron sirens could be heard in the videos.

People posted on Facebook about the attacks and robberies throughout the night. Many have questioned where so many robbers had sprung up from.

Most ATMs were out of cash and even many bank branches were running low on cash as the money supply had been disrupted due to inadequate security, The Daily Star reported, citing bankers.

"Overall, I visited almost 10 booths but failed to withdraw a single penny. Either they had run out of money or restricted the use of ATM cards issued by other banks," Nasir Hossain, a resident of the capital's Dhanmondi area, was quoted as saying by the paper.

Managing Director of Pubali Bank Mohammad Ali said although there is no cash crisis in the banking sector, they have been unable to deliver money to booths and branches as security companies that transport money have halted services.

"The security agencies that carry our cash told us that they will not provide services in the current situation," he said.

Hence, banks are struggling to supply money, especially to remote branches and booths, he added.

Meanwhile, political parties in the country discussed the structure of the interim Cabinet.

The anti-discrimination student movement has reportedly prepared a list of 15 names in the interim government. The list will be finalised after discussions with Yunus after he returns home on Thursday. According to multiple sources in the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the leaders of the student movement met BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday and discussed the list.

The anti-discrimination student movement has formed a liaison committee to discuss the list with various parties. *—PTI*

Gangs of criminals have been allegedly looting and robbing homes in the absence of law enforcers on Wednesday and Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Great Barrier Reef endangered by hottest oceans in 400 years

The Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef ecosystem suffered mass coral bleaching events between 2016 and 2024 ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

Ocean temperatures in the Great Barrier Reef hit their highest level in 400 years over the past decade, according to researchers who warned that the reef likely won't survive if planetary warming isn't stopped.

During that time, between 2016 and 2024, the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef ecosystem and one of the most biodiverse, suffered mass coral bleaching events. That's when water temperatures get too hot and coral expel the algae that provide them with colour and food, and sometimes die. Earlier this year, aerial surveys of over 300 reefs in the system off Australia's northeast coast found bleaching in shallow water areas spanning two-thirds of the reef, according to Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Researchers from Melbourne University and other universities in Australia, in a paper published on Wednesday in the journal Nature, were able to compare recent ocean temperatures to historical ones by using coral skeleton samples from the Coral Sea to reconstruct sea surface temperature data from 1618 to 1995. They coupled that with sea surface temperature data from 1900 to 2024. They observed largely stable temperatures before 1900, and steady warming from January to March from 1960 to 2024. And during five years of coral bleaching in the past decade — during 2016, 2017, 2020, 2022 and 2024 — temperatures in January and March were significantly higher than anything dating back to 1618, researchers found. They used climate models to attribute the warming rate after 1900 to human-caused climate change. The only other year nearly as warm as the mass bleaching years of the past decade was 2004. "The reef is in danger and if we don't divert from our current course, our generation will likely witness the demise of one of those great natural wonders," said Benjamin Henley, the study's lead author and a lecturer of sustainable urban management at the University of Melbourne. "If you put all of the evidence together ... heat extremes are occurring too often for those corals to effectively adapt and evolve." Across the world, reefs are key to seafood production and tourism. Scientists have long said additional loss of coral is likely to be a casualty of future warming as the world approaches the 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) threshold that countries agreed to try and keep warming under in the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Even if global warming is kept under the Paris Agreement's goal, which scientists say Earth is almost guaranteed to cross, 70 to 90 per cent of corals across the globe could be threatened, the study's authors said. As a result, future coral reefs would likely have less diversity in coral species — which has already been happening as the oceans have grown hotter.

Coral reefs have been evolving over the past quarter century in response to bleaching events like the ones the study's authors highlighted, said Michael McPhaden, a senior climate scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who was not involved with the study. But even the most robust coral may soon not be able to withstand the elevated temperatures expected under a warming climate with "the relentless rise in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere," he said. The Great Barrier Reef serves as an economic resource for the region and protects against severe tropical storms.

As more heat-tolerant coral replaces the less heat-tolerant species in the colourful underwater rainbow jungle, McPhaden said there's "real concern" about the expected extreme loss in the number of species and reduction in area that the world's largest reef covers. *—AP*

Sunita, Wilmore could have to stay in space till Feb 2025

Barry E Wilmore and Sunita Williams PHOTO: EPA

WASHINGTON DC, 8 AUG

When two American astronauts blasted off on a test mission to the International Space Station on 5 June, they were expecting to be back home in a matter of days.

But things didn't quite go to plan. In fact, Barry "Butch" Wilmore and Sunita Williams are still there, floating high above the Earth nearly two months later.

The pair - who are stuck indefinitely - now face the sudden prospect of missing the summer entirely and even spending Christmas and New Year in space.

Wilmore, 61, and Williams, 58, flew a Boeing Starliner spacecraft to the station. It was the first flight of its kind with people on board and was a test designed to see how the new spacecraft performs before it is used more regularly.

Problems, however, emerged as it made its approach. These included leaks in its propulsion system and some of its thrusters shutting down.

So while they made it to the space station safely, they will need an alternative mode of transport to get home if the Starliner is not deemed safe to return to earth.

One option being considered is to attach the two astronauts to a mission that is scheduled to launch in September, and return them to earth with that mission in February 2025.

That flight to the space station will be made by a SpaceX Crew Dragon craft.

If the Crew Dragon is used, the Starliner craft would be returned to Earth without any crew, under computer control.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials said it could take a week or more for a final decision. "I'm not complaining that we're here for a couple extra weeks," Williams said last month, in their briefing. *—BBC News*

Crisis-hardened Lebanese stockpile food as war looms

BEIRUT, 8 AUG

The bargain bins of the upmarket grocery in the Achrafieh area of eastern Beirut are filled with offers that are unusual for its high-end clientele. On sale: 40 rolls of toilet paper, 6-litre jugs of water, 10kg bags of powdered detergent, 5kg of sugar. Shoppers are ignoring the French cheese and heading straight to the canned goods. Their carts are stuffed with nappies, cartons of UHT milk and dried beans. "We're getting the food that will last the longest. We have no idea what the coming days will bring," Charbel Kiwan, a fruit and vegetable supplier, said while shopping with his wife and their two children. The family had been resolved in the morning to go shopping, but rushed to the store after Israeli jets broke the sound barrier three times in a row on Tuesday, rattling window-panes across the Lebanese capital. *—The Guardian*

PHOTO: X/@amnabaloch4

Amna Baloch set to be Pakistan's new Foreign Secretary

ISLAMABAD, 8 AUG

Amna Baloch, a seasoned diplomat, is set to become Pakistan's new Foreign Secretary, according to a media report on Thursday. Baloch, who is currently posted as Pakistan's Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg, will assume her office on September 11 to replace Dr Syrus Sajjad Qazi upon his retirement, The News International reported. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif approved the recommendations of Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar in his capacity as the Foreign Minister for the appointment of a new foreign secretary, highly placed sources in the Prime Minister's Office were quoted as saying by the report. *—PTI*

Indian Naval ship INS Tabar arrives in UK

LONDON, 8 AUG

The iconic Tower Bridge in London on Wednesday became a site of celebration as members of the Indian diaspora gathered to welcome Indian Navy's frontline frigate, Indian Naval Ship Tabar to the city. The picturesque event saw the historic bridge serve as a backdrop to the cultural unity and vibrant spirit of the Indian community in the UK, with several people chanting "Bharat Mata ki Jai". The INS Tabar's arrival was met with enthusiastic cheers and a sense of pride among the attendees. The moment was a beautiful blend of tradition and modernity, symbolizing the rich cultural heritage of India merging seamlessly with the historic landmarks of London. *—ANI*

British croc expert jailed for sexual abuse of dogs

LONDON, 8 AUG

A renowned British crocodile expert has been jailed for 10 years and five months in Australia, after admitting to sexually abusing dozens of dogs, in a case which horrified the nation. Adam Britton, a leading zoologist who has worked on BBC and National Geographic productions, pleaded guilty to 56 charges relating to bestiality and animal cruelty. He also admitted to four counts of accessing child abuse material. The Northern Territory (NT) Supreme Court heard the 53-year-old filmed himself torturing the animals until almost all died, and then shared the videos online under pseudonyms. His abuse went unnoticed for years, until a clue was found in one of his videos. Britton was arrested in April 2022 after a search of his rural Darwin property, which also uncovered child abuse material on his laptop. Britton's lawyer argued his offending was driven by a rare disorder causing intense, atypical sexual interests. *—BBC News*

232 people killed since Bangladesh govt's collapse

Actor Shanto Khan and his father were beaten to death

DHAKA, 8 AUG

At least 232 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the government led by Sheikh Hasina on Monday, according to a media report on Thursday, taking the death toll to 560 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-July.

Bangladeshi actor Shanto Khan and his father Selim Khan, a film producer, were beaten to death by a mob during the unrest.

Hasina resigned as Prime Minister and fled the country after weeks of tumultuous student protests against her regime. Before this, some 328 persons were killed in the clashes centring a movement around the quota system in government jobs from 16 July to 4 August. In all, some 560 people died over the last 23 days. Most of the 232 people died on Tuesday. At least 209 inmates fled from the Kashimpur high-security prison on Tuesday. The prison guards opened fire to stop the inmates from fleeing. Six people, including three militants, were killed in the incident, prison sources said.

At least 209 inmates fled from the Kashimpur high-security prison in Bangladesh on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

The police headquarters has requested everyone to cooperate with the police members so that they can join their workstations. Security concerns have gripped the country since Hasina's ouster as police observed a work abstention, citing fears for their safety amid reports of deadly attacks on security personnel.

India's Vishwa Hindu Parishad appealed to the Centre to protect Hindus in violence-hit Bangladesh amid the unrest there, and ensure "jihadis" under the garb of refugees do not sneak into India from there. *—PTI*

Hasina will be back once democracy is restored, says Hasina's son Joy

KOLKATA, 8 AUG

Sajeeb Wazed Joy PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Sheikh Hasina, who quit as prime minister and fled Bangladesh, will be back in the country as soon as democracy is restored, his son Sajeeb Wazed Joy said on Thursday and blamed Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI, for fuelling the ongoing unrest in the country. He also asserted that the members of the Sheikh Mujibur Rahman family will neither abandon its people nor leave the beleaguered Awami League. He expressed gratitude to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. *—PTI*

Heartbroken that I cannot see, hug my mother: Hasina's daughter

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Saima Wazed PHOTO: X@WHOSEARO

Former Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina's daughter Saima Wazed on Thursday said she was "heartbroken" by the loss of lives in her country and that she could not "see or hug" her mother during such a difficult time. Hasina resigned as prime minister and travelled to India on Monday following unprecedented anti-government protests. "Heartbroken with the loss of life in my country Bangladesh that I love," Wazed said. *—PTI*

Flooding in Yemen has left 30 people dead

SANAA, 8 AUG

A Yemeni official has said that 30 people have been killed and hundreds displaced in flooding in the southern city of Hodeidah following several days of heavy rains.

Hodeidah Governor Mugammad Qahim told Houthi rebel-controlled Masirah TV on Wednesday that the floods displaced people from 500 homes. Five people were missing, he said.

Hodeidah, the southwestern city of Taiz, and the northwestern city of Hajjah were all hit hard by floods this week during Yemen's ongoing seasonal rainfall that caused flooding that swept away poorly built homes.

Authorities have not announced a confirmed overall death toll, or given the overall number of people injured or missing.

Yemen's rainy season begins in late March, and rains intensify in July through mid-August.

The UN's humanitarian office in Yemen said Wednesday afternoon that Friday floods in the Maqbnah district in Taiz city killed 15 people, cleared agricultural lands and damaged homes and infrastructure.

Authorities have not announced a confirmed overall death toll, or given the overall number of people injured or missing PHOTO: AP

Local authorities still haven't reached areas severely affected by the floods for two days, leaving some residents trapped inside their homes, according to witnesses. Mahdi al-Mashat, chairman of the Supreme Political Council, ordered local authorities to respond to damaged areas, according to Masirah TV, which reported that floods caused "major damages to properties, lands, and roads" in Hodeidah.

The United Nations Population Fund-Yemen said this week on the social media platform X that the floods impacted more than 28,000 people living in four districts in Hajjah city. *—AP*

Quake hits Japan's coast, tsunami warning issued

TOKYO, 8 AUG

A powerful earthquake struck off Japan's southern coast on Thursday, triggering a tsunami advisory. Residents were urged to stay away from the coastline, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or serious damage.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said the quake registered magnitude 7.1 and was centred in waters off the eastern coast of Japan's southern main island of Kyushu at a depth of about 30 kilometres. The quake most strongly shook Nichinan city and nearby areas in Miyazaki prefecture on Kyushu island.

Tsunami waves of up 50 centimetres were detected along parts of Kyushu's southern coast. *—AP*

Vance amplifies false claim about Harris' racial identity

WASHINGTON, 8 AUG

Vice Presidential candidate Sen JD Vance PHOTO: PTI

Ohio Sen JD Vance, Donald Trump's running mate, defended on Wednesday a false claim the former president made about Vice President Kamala Harris ' racial identity, suggesting wrongly that Harris had downplayed her Black heritage in trying to suggest she's inauthentic.

"What I took it as was an attack on Kamala Harris being a chameleon," he told reporters when asked in Michigan about the former president's suggestion that Harris, the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, had only recently identified as Black.

"I think he was observing the basic foundational reality that Kamala Harris pretends to be something different depending on what audience she's speaking to," Vance said. "She fakes who she is depending on the audience she's in front of, and that's who she is and that's who she's always been."

Vance's was the most recent of the Republican criticisms of how Harris portrays herself, in the wake of Trump's comments last week to the National Association of Black Journalists conference in Chicago. Florida Rep. Byron Donalds, a high-profile Trump surrogate who is a Black man, echoed the claim on Sunday as a guest on ABC's "This Week." *—AP*

AT LEAST 90 HELD

A protester uses a fire extinguisher on police officers as trouble flares during the protest outside the Holiday Inn Express in UK PHOTO: PTI

Far-Right protesters clash with police in UK as unrest spreads

LONDON, 8 AUG

Far-Right rioters have been deterred by the administration of "swift justice", Diana Johnson, the policing minister has said as she warned there would be further arrests and charges brought against suspects.

The riots come in the backdrop of the death of three girls aged between six and nine on 29 July, during an attack at singer Taylor Swift-themed dance event for children in the seaside town of Southport, in northern England.

Police arrested a 17-year-old male and false information was circulated that the suspect was an Islamist migrant, which led to violent anti-Muslim protests. Shops were boarded up across the country in response to the threat of more than 100 planned anti-immigration protests, but in most places these failed to materialise after thousands of peaceful anti-racism demonstrators turned out.

Some 400 people have now been arrested and 140 charged - with police arresting more at dawn raids earlier. At least 6,000 extra officers were deployed.

According to police data it is estimated that more than 100 police officers have been injured in the disorder over the last week.

The UK is home to an estimated over 1,80,000 Indian students. Meanwhile India issued a travel advisory for its citizens travelling to the UK, urging them to exercise caution following a wave of violent protests in several British cities. *—Guardian/ BBC News*

Taylor Swift's Vienna concerts cancelled after attack threat

VIENNA, 8 AUG

Organisers of three Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna this week called them off on Wednesday after officials announced arrests over an apparent plot to launch an attack on an event in the Vienna area such as the concerts. Swift was scheduled to play at the Austrian capital's Ernst Happel Stadium on Thursday, Friday and Saturday as part of her Eras Tour. Event organizer Barracuda Music said on Instagram that "we have no choice but to cancel the three scheduled shows for everyone's safety." It cited government officials' "confirmation" of a planned attack. Authorities said they had arrested two, one of whom appeared to be planning an attack on an event in the Vienna area. *—AP*

US asks Kyiv to describe strategy of its recent ops

WASHINGTON, 8 AUG

After Russian President Vladimir Putin decried Ukraine's incursion into his country's Kursk region as a "large-scale provocation," Washington asked Kyiv to describe the strategy of its recent operations in the Russian border region north of Kharkiv.

On Tuesday, 6 August, some units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces (AFU) reportedly attempted to penetrate Russia's Kursk region, the region's acting governor Alexei Smirnov said, claims that have since been widely verified.

Putin was quick to cry foul of "indiscriminate" targeting of Russian assets, but slow to register any irony in his comments, as his unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has killed thousands of civilians.

—Courtesy, The Kyiv Post

SOUTH CHINA SEA

China confirms discovery of 'ultra-shallow' gas field

BEIJING, 8 AUG

China has confirmed the discovery of a major gas field, estimated to be over 100 billion cubic metres, in the disputed South China Sea, which is expected to add fuel to the current round of military and diplomatic tensions between Beijing and other claimants in the region.

The original gas in place (OGIP) of the Lingshui 36-1 gas field- the world's first large, ultra-shallow gas field in ultra-deep waters -- has been estimated at more than 100 billion cubic meters, state-run China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) announced on Wednesday.

The relevant government authorities have approved the data, it said. The Lingshui 36-1 gas field is located in waters

The Lingshui 36-1 gas field in the South China Sea PHOTO: CMG

southeast of Hainan, China's southernmost island province, the CNOOC said, without specifying whether it falls in the disputed waters of the South China Sea (SCS).

The SCS is hotly contested waters. While China claims most of the SCS, The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims. The US, EU, Japan and allies back the claims of the small countries against China.

Observers say the findings of a massive new gas field were expected to add to the prevailing tensions. The CNOOC has estimated that the OGIP of the Yinggehai, Qiongdongnan and Zhujiangkou basins in the SCS is more than 1 trillion cubic meters. Tensions are mounting in the South SCS – a hotly contested and globally significant waterway that has become a flashpoint for conflict mainly because of its rich oil, natural gas and fish resources. It is also one of the world's busiest shipping routes, through which more than 20 per cent of global trade passes.

China is the world's largest natural gas importer, with about USD 64.3 billion spent on 120 million tonnes of liquefied and pipe gas in 2023. The discovery of major reserves would be a boost to the country's energy security. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Silver plunges by ₹1,100 per 10g; gold flat at ₹71,350

MUMBAI, 8 AUG

Gold prices ruled flat at Rs 71,350 per 10 grams while silver prices declined by Rs 1,100 per kg in the local market here on Thursday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver prices plunged by Rs 1,100 to Rs 81,100 per kg on decreased offtake by coin makers and industrial units. The metal closed at Rs 82,200 per kg in the previous session. In the national capital, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity remained flat at Rs 71,350 and 71,000 per 10 grams, respectively. On the global front, gold at Comex was quoted at USD 2,396 per ounce, up by USD 3 from the prior day. Meanwhile, silver was flat at USD 26.89 per ounce in the overseas markets. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 1 paisa to close at 83.96 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 8 AUG

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 1 paisa at 83.96 (provisional) against US dollar on Thursday, after the Reserve Bank expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.94 and touched an intraday low of 83.97 and a high of 83.93 against the dollar during the session. It finally settled at 83.96 (provisional) against the American currency, down 1 paisa from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 3 paise at 83.95 against US dollar. The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 on Monday . *—PTI*

MRF profit dips to ₹571 cr; total revenue at ₹7K cr

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Tyre maker MRF on Thursday said its consolidated net profit declined by 3 per cent year-on-year to Rs 571 crore for the first quarter ended 30 June, 2024. The company had reported a net profit of Rs 589 crore in the April-June quarter of last fiscal. Total income increased to Rs 7,280 crore for the period under review as against Rs 6,515 crore in the June quarter of FY24, MRF Ltd said in a regulatory filing. Shares of the company were trading 4.80 per cent higher at Rs 1,41,130 apiece on the BSE. *—PTI*

Wipro acquires US-based Columbus Hydraulics

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Wipro Hydraulics, part of homegrown Wipro Infrastructure Engineering, on Thursday said it has acquired the US-based Columbus Hydraulics to strengthen its presence in North American market. The company did not disclose the transaction value. The entity has been acquired to strengthen presence in the North American market, Wipro Infrastructure Engineering said in a statement. Wipro Infrastructure Engineering said it has acquired 100 stake in Columbus Hydraulics through its hydraulics cylinder manufacturing business Wipro Hydraulics. Post acquisition, Columbus Hydraulics will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wipro Infrastructure Engineering. As per the company statement, the acquisition of Columbus Hydraulics its fifth for hydraulics business and fourteenth overall. Headquartered in Nebraska, Columbus brings 150 skilled employees and a state-of-the-art plant. . *—PTI*

Market tumbles nearly 1% post RBI policy decision

Sensex declines by 581.79 points to settle at 78,886.22

MUMBAI, 8 AUG

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly 1 per cent down on Thursday after the Reserve Bank of India decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the ninth time in a row, saying food inflation remains stubborn.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 581.79 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 78,886.22 in a volatile trade. During the day, it tumbled 669.07 points or 0.84 per cent to 78,798.94.

After a day's breather, the NSE Nifty retreated to close lower by 180.50 points or 0.74 per cent to 24,117. During the day, it tanked 217.8 points or 0.89 per cent to 24,079.70.

Retaining its unambiguous focus on inflation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which consists of three RBI and three external members, kept the benchmark repurchase or repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

PHOTO: PTI

The panel, whose four-year term ends in October, also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Asian Paints, Infosys, JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, HCL Technologies and Tata Steel were the biggest laggards.

Tata Motors, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ITC, IndusInd Bank and Axis Bank were the gainers. *—PTI*

World shares slip after decline on Wall Street

TOKYO, 8 AUG

- Thursday will bring the latest numbers on Americans filing for unemployment benefits in the first snapshot of the US labour market

Shares skidded Thursday in Europe and Asia but to a more moderate degree than the gyrations that shook global markets earlier this week.

France's CAC 40 gave up 1.2 per cent to 7,176.23, while Germany's DAX lost 0.8 per cent to 17,475.03. Britain's FTSE 100 shed 1.1per cent to 8,078.72. The futures for the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average were down 0.3per cent .

Thursday will bring the latest numbers on Americans filing for unemployment benefits in the first snapshot of the US labour market since last week's deeply disappointing jobs data for July sent financial markets spiralling on fears that the economy might be edging toward a recession.

In Asian trading, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 finished at 34,831.15, down 0.7per cent . Australia's S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.2per cent to 7,682.00. South Korea's Kospi dropped 0.5per cent to 2,556.73.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose nearly 0.1per cent to 16,891.83. The Shanghai Composite was virtually unchanged at 2,869.90.

The Japanese yen was relatively stable Thursday. *—PTI*

MONETARY POLICY

RBI retains growth & inflation rate at 7.2% & 4.5%

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Reserve Bank on Thursday retained the growth and inflation projection at 7.2 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively for the current fiscal amid expectations of a normal monsoon.

In its last bi-monthly monetary policy review in June, RBI had projected real GDP growth and retail inflation at the same.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das while announcing bi-monthly monetary policy said that improved agricultural activity brightens the prospects of rural consumption, while sustained buoyancy in services activity would support urban consumption.

Taking all these factors into consideration, he said, real GDP growth for 2024-25 is projected at 7.2 per cent, with Q1 at 7.1 per cent; Q2 at 7.2 per cent; Q3 at 7.3 per cent; and Q4 at 7.2 per cent.

Real GDP growth for Q1 FY26 is projected at 7.2 per cent, he said, adding, the risks are evenly balanced.

On inflation, Das said, a degree of relief in food inflation is expected from the pick-up in the south-west monsoon and healthy progress in sowing and buffer stocks of cereals continue to be above the norms.

RBI also proposed to create a public repository of digital lending apps in a bid to address the problems arising from mushrooming unauthorised players in the segment.

In another significant move, the central bank proposed to introduce a facility of "Delegated Payments" in UPI to enable an individual to allow another individual to make UPI transactions.

In a post-monetary policy review address, Das said the central bank has taken several measures for the orderly development of the digital lending ecosystem in India.

Observing that alternative investment avenues are becoming more attractive to retail customers, he said, as a result banks are facing challenges on the funding front with deposits trailing loan growth. *—PTI*

India's forex reserves hit record high

Mumbai, 8 Aug

The country's forex reserves touched a record high of USD 675 billion on 2 August, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Thursday. The previous all-time high for the kitty was USD 670.857 billion on 19 July this year, and the last reported reserve was USD 667.386 billion as on 26 July. Das said foreign portfolio investors turned net buyers in the domestic market from June 2024 with net inflows of USD 9.7 billion during June- to August 6. Gross foreign direct investment (FDI) rose by more than 20 per cent in April-May 2024, he added. *—PTI*

IT hiring to surge 8.5% by 2025 as demand grows: Report

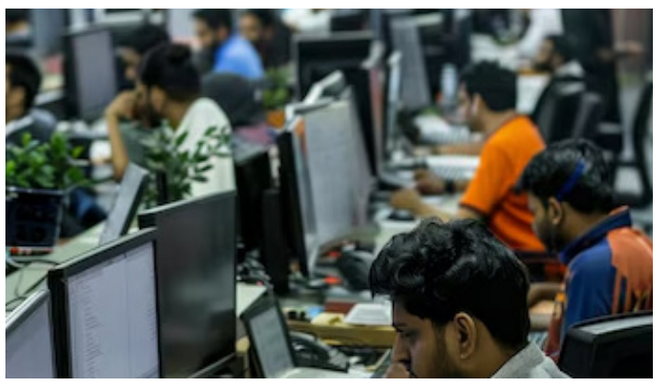
MUMBAI, 8 AUG

With IT companies gradually coming out of the slump and actively ramping up their hiring efforts, a report on Thursday said that recruitment is set to surge with an estimated 8.5 per cent increase in job roles within the industry by next year.

The demand for skilled IT talent is growing after a slow period late last year and early this year. Hiring is set to surge, with an estimated 8.5 per cent increase in job roles within the industry by next year, according to a report by Indeed, a global job matching and hiring platform and a subsidiary of Recruit Holdings.

This data from Indeed has been compiled from Indeed Hiring Tracker and Indeedâs platform data. Indeed Hiring Tracker is a quarterly report that explores the employment landscape and job market.

The report further revealed that almost 70 per cent of all tech jobs currently on the Indeed platform are for software roles.



Almost 70 per cent of all tech jobs currently on the Indeed platform are for software roles PHOTO: FREEPIK

The dominance of software roles on Indeed is driven by the rapid adoption of technologies by companies like AI, machine learning, and blockchain which has further amplified the need for specialised software development.

The thriving tech startup ecosystem also plays a significant role, as new ventures prioritise hiring developers to build and scale their products.

According to Indeed data, companies are actively hiring for roles such as Application Developer, Software Engineer, Full-Stack Developer, Senior Software Engineer, and PHP Developer. *—PTI*

AIRTEL PAYMENTS NET PROFIT RISES 41% TO ₹7.2 CR

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Airtel Payments Bank on Thursday said its net profit for the June quarter rose 41 per cent year-on-year to Rs 7.2 crore, amid uptick in digital savings bank accounts alongside other digital offerings.

Announcing its consolidated report card for the first quarter ended on June 30, 2024, Airtel Payments Bank said it has hit a significant milestone and that, in a first, the bank's quarterly revenue grew to Rs 610 crore, up by 52 per cent.

The Bank's annualised gross merchandise value stands at over Rs 3,400 billion (Rs 3,40,000 crore). Airtel Payments Bank NCMC-enabled card is a multi-purpose card that allows users to tap and pay for public transportation in various cities.

It processes over 8 billion transactions annually across its platforms. *—PTI*

The government brought a uniform rate of 5 per cent GST on aircraft parts components, tools and toolkits PHOTO: PTI

Aircraft industry's value to reach $4B in 7 yrs: Minister

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

- According to Union Civil Aviation Ministry data, the government has taken several steps to facilitate setting up of aircraft MRO services in India through various policy

The government has taken several steps to facilitate setting up of aircraft MRO services in India and the value of the total business may go up from USD 2 billion to USD 4 billion in seven years, Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu said in the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

He also said that, in a major boost to the domestic Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) industry and the aviation sector, the government brought a uniform rate of 5 per cent GST on aircraft parts components, testing equipment, tools and toolkits.

Naidu said if anyone wanted to set up an MRO industry with an airstrip or airport anywhere in India, the Centre was ready to provide all assistance.

He said the country's aviation industry had seen massive transformation and growth during the past 10 years under the Narendra Modi government, with domestic airlines placing orders for more 1,100 aircraft.

According to Union Civil Aviation Ministry data, the government has taken several steps to facilitate setting up of aircraft MRO services in India through various policy, regulatory and other incentives.

The government announced new MRO guidelines on 1 September, 2021, with a promise to provide land allotments for MROs. *—PTI*

Jio gets 50% share in Rs 1K mkt segment

MUMBAI, 8 AUG

Reliance Industries' 2024 annual report revealed that JioBharat, an affordable keypad smartphone, has achieved an impressive 50 per cent market share in the sub-Rs 1,000 segment.

Launched with the mission to empower every Indian with digital services, JioBharat has marked a significant step towards digital freedom for the 250 million feature phone users in India, bridging digital divide like never before.

Since its launch a year ago, JioBharat has been transforming lives by offering features and digital capabilities such as UPI, JioCinema, and JioTV, enabling various segments of society to achieve more.

This affordable device not only empowers users with smartphone capabilities but also provides high-quality and affordable data, making it accessible to the common people. Despite the recent industry-wide tariff increases, Jio has maintained consistent pricing for JioBharat, allowing users to enjoy full digital capabilities at just Rs 123 per month.

JioBharat has marked a significant step towards digital freedom for the 250 million feature phone users in India PHOTO: PTI

- The subsequent launch of affordable devices like JioPhone and the availability JioFiber has truly democratised data connectivity

In contrast, the most affordable plans from other operators start at Rs 199 per month and enables access to limited functionality, restricted to voice and SMS services, as their feature phones do not support data or LTE usage.

The subsequent launch of affordable devices like JioPhone and the availability of affordable wired broadband (JioFiber) has truly democratised data connectivity. *—ANI*

'India equipped to achieve 500 GW of renewable energy'

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

India is well on its way to reach its target of allocating 50 GW of annual renewable capacity towards achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel installed capacity by 2030, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights.

By June, the total renewable capacity in India reached 148 GW, with an impressive pipeline of 140 GW in various stages of development.

India's renewable energy sector witnessed growth in the first half of 2024, approximately 70 GW of tenders were announced, and 38 GW of capacity was awarded to successful bidders, with competitive tenders driving the expansion of renewables and energy storage projects in the first quarter. *—ANI*

SEBI extends tenure limit for Large Value Funds

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Markets regulator SEBI has amended alternative investment funds (AIF) norms specifying maximum permissible limit for extension of tenure by 'Large Value Funds'.

In a notification, SEBI said a large value fund for accredited investors may be permitted to extend its tenure up to five years. This is subject to the approval of two-thirds of the unit holders by value of their investment in the large value fund for accredited investors.

The extension in tenure of any existing scheme of a large value fund for accredited investors will be subject to such conditions as specified by the regulator.

The move is aimed at providing clarity to investors in Large Value Funds for Accredited Investors (LVFs) about their investment horizon.

Large Value Fund (LVF) for accredited investors means an AIF or scheme of an AIF in which each investor (other than the manager, sponsor, employees or directors of the AIF or employees or directors of the manager) is an accredited investor and invests at least Rs 70 crore.

Additionally, the regulator has allowed Category I and II AIFs to borrow for a period of up to 30 days for the purpose of meeting temporary shortfall in drawdown from investors while making investments in a bid to facilitate ease of doing business and provide operational flexibility.

To give this effect, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has amended AIF rules on 5 August. *—PTI*

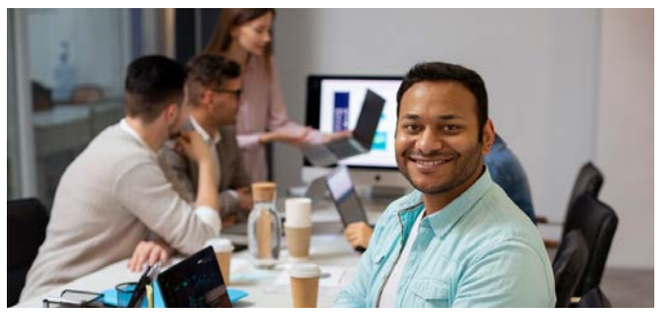
DRAWN TO NEW AGE JOBS

43% GenZ give up on work-life balance

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

One in every four GenZ respondents in India is more inclined towards new-age job fields like Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity and content creation while 43 per cent are willing to sacrifice the work-life balance to succeed in their career, a study has found.

The study, the Quest Report 2024, which unveils Gen Z traits and trends on dreams, careers, and aspirations, also found that only 9 per cent of respondents want to pursue entrepreneurship as they seek stability and security in work life. Gen Z usually refers to those born between 1995 and 2010. "One out of 4 Indian respondents are more inclined towards new-age job fields like content creation, data analysis, AI, and cybersecurity," the study commissioned by iQOO in association with CyberMedia Research, said. iQOO is a sub-smartphone brand of the vivo group.



Over 62 per cent of the Indian youth are willing to give up their hobbies and other interests to achieve their dreams PHOTO: FREEPIK

"43 per cent of respondents in India and 46 per cent globally are willing to give up work-life balance to succeed in their career," it said, adding that around 62 per cent of the Indian youth are willing to give up their hobbies and other interests to achieve their dreams.

"Recent debate on work-life balance due to deliberation on 14-hour work day & 70-hour workweek have stirred conversations amongst the Gen Z," the study noted.

The study of 6,700 Gen Z respondents, aged between 20-24 years, from seven countries including the US, the UK, Malaysia Brazil and India, stated that 19 per cent of Indians surveyed prefer career advancements in big organisations while 84 per cent of Indian respondents believe their jobs align with their goals, compared to 72 per cent globally.

As many as 45 per cent of Questers said that they would take up higher studies to support their quest while 32 per cent believe they should take up relevant jobs to support their dreams. *—PTI*

SREEJESH OUR WALL, HARMANPREET OUR SOUL

India defeat Spain 2-1 to clinch 2nd consecutive Bronze

PARIS, 8 AUG

The Indian men's hockey team clinched a second successive bronze medal at the Olympic Games for the first time in 52 years with a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Spain, giving veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh a fitting farewell here on Thursday.

It was tense last few minutes for the Indians as they faced two short corners within the last minute but the defence stood tall and soaked in the pressure. India, who claimed the bronze in Tokyo Games after a hiatus of 41 years, lived up to the expectations despite not having a perfect build-up to the Games.

The last time India won back-to-back Olympic medals was in 1968 (bronze) and 1972 editions (bronze). The bronze medal was also a desperate wait for the Indian contingent In Paris, which has endured six fourth-place finishes so far, apart from heartbreaking disqualification of wrestler Vinesh Phogat.

Spain went ahead with skipper Marc Miralles (18th) converting a penalty stroke while India captain Harmanpreet Singh (30th, 33rd) stole the limelight with a brace. Shrugging off their heart-wrenching 2-3 defeat against Germany in the semi-final, India came out all guns blazing to dominate the possession in the first quarter.

The Spanish came with more purpose and intensity in the second quarter and pressed hard on the Indian goal. They took the lead in the 18th minute through a penalty stroke conversion by Miralles after Manpreet Singh conceded an unnecessary foul inside the D.

Sreejesh foiled an attempt from Spain as India kept its 2-1 lead till the end of third quarter. Hardik had to be taken off the field five minutes after the fourth quarter after he collided with a rival player to suffer a hand injury. —*PTI*

SREEJESH EXCELLED UNDER THE BAR: JUDE FELIX

DANIEL GEORGE

Bengaluru, 8 Aug

A big credit should be given to veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh for India's victory in the bronze medal match against Spain at Paris Olympics on Thursday, said former Indian hockey skipper and two-time Olympian Jude Felix Sebastian. "The veteran custodian excelled under the bar in his swansong and made a stunning save in the final quarter to ensure India's 2-1 victory over Spain," Sebastian said. The former coach of the India junior men's hockey team said: "I did heave a sigh of relief after skipper Harmanpreet Singh netted the equalizer, seconds before the half-time hooter. It was heartening that the team led by Harmanpreet Singh recovered quickly after the disappointment of missing out on the gold medal by bringing home the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics." The captain of Indian hockey team from 1993 to 1995 lauded the efforts of Singh in converting two penalties. "He was simply superb and stuck to his game plan and sealed the victory." —*Salar News*

Reconsider retirement decision: Babita to Vesh

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

Commonwealth Games gold medallist grappler Babita Phogat on Thursday urged her cousin Vinesh to reconsider her decision to retire from wrestling following her disqualification from the 50kg category competition ahead of the gold medal bout at the Paris Olympics.

Competing in her third Olympics, Vinesh was found to be 100 grams overweight during the weigh-in ahead of her summit clash against USA's Sarah Ann Hildebrandt, following which she was disqualified and became ineligible for a medal.

As Vinesh's long-cherished Olympic dream shattered by a cruel twist of fate, the 29-year-old bid adieu to her international wrestling career, saying that she doesn't have the strength to continue anymore. "In 2012, even I was not able to play the Asian Championship because I was overweight by 200 grams. There are several other instances where wrestlers have been disqualified for being overweight," Babita, a former world championship bronze medallist, told PTI Videos.

Babita said the country was saddened by Vinesh's call to bid adieu to wrestling and hoped that she would reconsider her decision and train for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

India's first individual Olympic gold medallist shooter Abhinav Bindra paid glowing tributes to Phogat, saying her fight resonated with him and she embodies the "true spirit of a warrior". —*PTI*

A DECORATED CAREER

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP		
2019	Nur-Sultan	53 kg
2022	Belgrade	53 kg
ASIAN GAMES		
2018	Jakarta	50 kg
2014	Incheon	48 kg
COMMONWEALTH GAMES		
2022	Birmingham	53 kg
2018	Gold Coast	50 kg
2014	Glasgow	48 kg

> **I got to know about her retirement through social media and I am also shocked to learn she decided to retire on her own. So, I would urge her on behalf of the Wrestling Federation of India to not make decisions in a sad state of mind and make a rational decision once she has recovered from the debacle mentally. We will also talk to her**
>
> -Sanjay Singh, Wrestling Federation of India chief

COUNTRIES				
1. China	28	25	17	70
2. US	27	35	33	95
3. Aus	18	14	11	43
4. France	13	18	21	52
69. India	0	0	3	3

Golf: Aditi, Diksha tied-14th after Round 2

PARIS, 8 AUG

Indian golfers Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar were at tied-14th in the 60-player field after two rounds at the Paris Olympics women' golf competition here on Thursday.

Aditi played 1-under 71 after a first round 72 and Diksha was even at 72 after a first round 71. At 1-under each for 36 holes, the Indian duo was Tied-14 in the 60-player field, which has no cut.

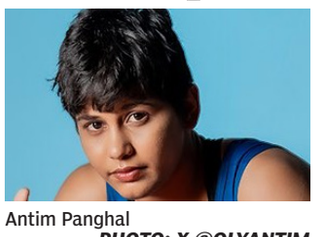
Aditi had four birdies, all in succession from the sixth to the ninth against bogeys on the third, fifth and 12th. Diksha was 2-under with birdies on the Par-5 third and Par-3 11th and stayed 2-under till she came to the 18th, where she messed a third shot with a wedge and ended with a double.

Aditi Ashok **PHOTO: PTI**

India's Avinash Sable failed to keep pace with the best in the business as he finished 11th in the Paris Olympics men's 3000m steeplechase final race here on Wednesday. —*PTI*

Panghal likely to get 3-year ban for indiscipline

PARIS, 8 AUG



Antim Panghal **PHOTO: X @OLYANTIM**

India's biggest wrestling medal hope at the Paris Games, Antim Panghal ended her Olympic campaign with a humiliating 0-10 defeat to Turkey's Yetgil Zeynep in the women's 53 kg category.

Panghal, who caused embarrassment to the Indian Olympic contingent by trying to facilitate her sister's entry into the athletes village through her accreditation card, is likely to be banned for three years by Indian Olympic Association (IOA), a source told PTI on Thursday.

Panghal had crashed out of the Olympics after losing her opening bout in the women's 53kg category on Wednesday.

"IOA officials discussed the issue that caused embarrassment to all. The ban on everyone involved, including the coaches," a source in the Indian contingent told PTI. "First, we need to ensure that she reaches home. The decision will be announced only after she reaches India," the source added.

Panghal is set to take a flight to Delhi on Thursday evening. The IOA decided to send her and her support staff back after the disciplinary breach was brought to its notice by the French authorities. The body, however, asserted that the ban has not yet been imposed.

"A ban has not been imposed as yet," said an IOA official. Speaking with PTI before her flight back to India, the 19-year-old said, "I did not intend to do anything wrong. I was not well and there was confusion. All of this happened due to confusion." —*PTI*

China wins artistic swimming Gold

SAINT-DENIS, 7 AUG

China took gold in the artistic swimming team event Wednesday night at the Paris Olympics, with the United States getting silver and Spain taking bronze.

China dominated in the absence of Russia, which had won every gold medal in artistic beginning with the 2000 Sydney Games. China finished with 996.1389 points, ahead of the Americans' 914.3421 and Spain's 900.7319. It was the first US medal in the sport since 2004. It was a big medal for China, and also a step forward for the sport, which changed its name from synchronised swimming several years ago to update its image. Some swimmers still call it "synchro." "There is attention to the sport that has never happened before," said Adam Andrasko, who heads USA Artistic Swimming. "This is an absolutely different sport." "People are pleasantly confused about how in the world these women can do what they do," Andrasko said. —*AP*

Mirabai's bid for 2nd Olympic medal falls short

PARIS, 7 AUG

Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu came tantalisingly close to clinching a second Olympic medal but a faltered lift in her final attempt cruelly snatched the dream from her grasp, leaving her with a fourth place finish in the women's 49kg event here on Wednesday.

Mirabai, who turns 30 on Thursday, lifted a total of 199kg (88kg+111kg) at the South Paris Arena. It was 3kgs less than what she heaved at the Tokyo Olympics (202 kg) for a silver medal. Mirabai could manage only three lifts out of six attempts. She had only one successful lift in the clean and jerk section. The former world champion had done well to keep herself in medal contention after the snatch event but her failure to lift 114kg in her final clean and jerk attempt cost her dearly. —*PTI*

PARAGUAYAN SWIMMER LUANA KICKED OUT OF OLYMPICS VILLAGE

PARIS, 8 AUG

The Paraguay's swimmer Luana Alonso was ordered to leave the premises after the 20-year-old reportedly went out of the village to visit Disneyland in Paris instead of supporting her teammates on 27 July during women's 100m butterfly semifinals. Larissa Schaerer, Paraguayan Olympic Committee boss said that Alonso's presence is creating an inappropriate atmosphere within the team. Alonso, is yet react on the issue but she had announced her retirement from the sport after she missed out on qualification for the semifinal by 0.24 seconds.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Nielsen appointed as supporting coach for PCB

LAHORE, 8 AUG

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed former Australia first-class player Tim Nielsen as the new red-ball high-performance coach to kick-start the rebuilding process of the side, which is going through a turbulent period. The move comes on the heels of former Australian pace bowler Jason Gillespie being appointed the red-ball head coach. A source in the PCB confirmed that Nielsen, who has coached the Australian team for four years, was recommended by Gillespie as both have worked at the South Australian cricket academy. The PCB said the move aims to bolster the team's preparation ahead of their upcoming Test series against Bangladesh. PCB added that Nielsen had already joined Gillespie's support staff and the duo will monitor the Pakistan training camp ahead of the series against Bangladesh. —*PTI*

DURAND CUP

MOHUN BAGAN CRUSH INDIAN AIR FORCE 6-0

KOLKATA, 8 AUG

Mohun Bagan Super Giant thrashed Indian Air Force FT 6-0 to go on top of Group A above arch-rivals East Bengal in the 133rd Durand Cup here on Thursday.

Mohun Bagan lead the group on virtue of goal difference, making the Kolkata Derby on 18 August a must win affair for both sides to decide the group winners and subsequently for a place in the knockouts.

Jason Cummings scored a brace -- one in each half -- and Thomas Aldred, Greg Stewart, Anirudh Thapa and Liston Colaco scored the other goals for the Mariners.

Mohun Bagan took the lead in the fourth minute as they compounded pressure onto Indian Air Force's defence and the men in blue gave away the ball to the Mariners.

Sahal Abdul Samad put Jason Cummings through on goal inside the box and the Aussie striker put it past the goalie for the first goal.

Jason Steven Cummings of Mohun Bagan celebrates goal with teammates during the 2024 Durand Cup match on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

The Mariners continued to pile in the pressure on the Air Force men and scored their second within six minutes.

There was complete one-way traffic in the game with the Mariners putting relentless pressure on the Indian Air Force Men.

The Mariners continued to dominate proceedings in the second half. The IAF men defended better in the second half but their resilience was broken by Anirudh Thapa's blinder. The substitute hit a first time volley from the edge of the box, which found the bottom corner of the post. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

INDIA TO HOST ELITE SHOOTERS IN ISSF WC FINAL

NEW DELHI, 8 AUG

India will host the cream of world shooting when one of the most prestigious ISSF events, the World Cup Final (WCF), is held at the Karni Singh Ranges here in October this year. The WCF will be the season-ending tournament for elite shooters in pistol, rifle and shotgun to determine the best exponents in their respective events for the year. All the medal winners in the 12 individual Olympics shooting events at the Paris Olympics have automatically qualified for the WCF along with the title winners. —*PTI*

India may go with new combination, says Rohit

COLOMBO, 8 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

India may adopt a 'horses-for-courses' policy after failing to counter the spin-friendly conditions here which led to their first series defeat to Sri Lanka in ODI cricket in 27 years.

A spirited Sri Lanka used conditions to their advantage as their spinners bamboozled the Indian batters on slow and turning pitches to register a 2-0 win in the three-ODI series following a 110-run loss in the final game.

"I don't see there is a lack of effort in how we want to try and play different shots. You saw some of these guys played reverse sweep, paddle and all that — that is not the nature of their batsmanship," Rohit told the media after his team were shot out for 138 in pursuit of 249 in the third ODI here on Wednesday.

Talking about Sri Lanka batters, Rohit said: "They were very consistent with their sweeps. They were taking their chances of playing that sweep shot. Not a lot of runs were scored down the ground," the Indian skipper said in comparison.

Rohit said self-belief in Indian batters was perhaps missing even though they have played on such wickets since their early days.

Rohit, who scored 58, 64 and 35 in the three ODIs, stuck with his aggressive style of play at the top and gave his reasoning behind the approach. —*PTI*